Karlheinz Münch

StuG.Abt. 197

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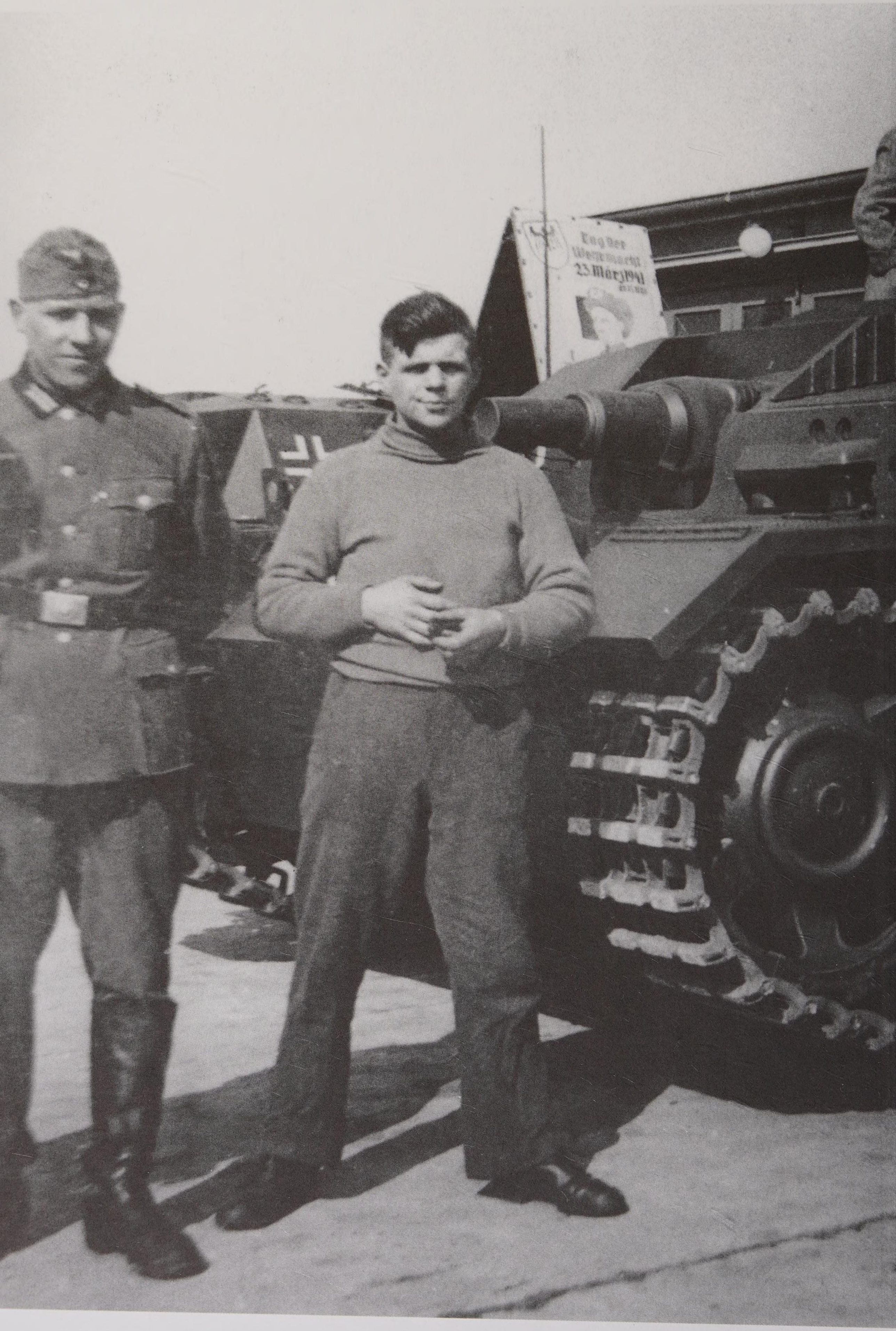
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StuG.Abt. 197

Karlheinz Münch

Katowice – Speyer 2007

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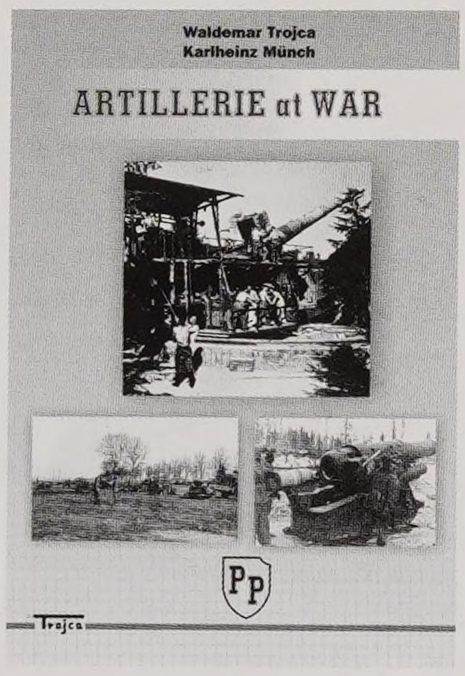

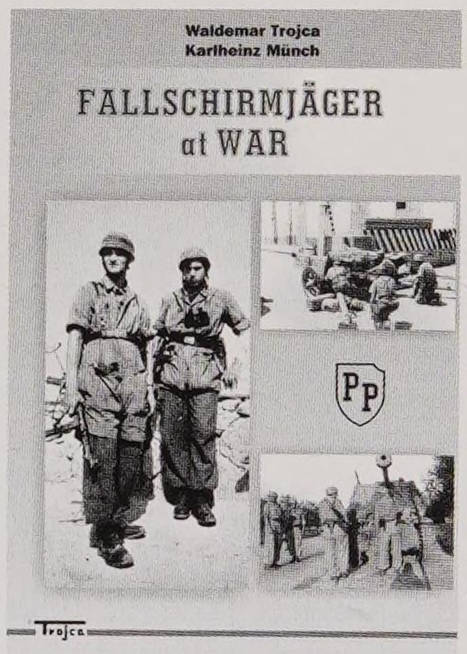

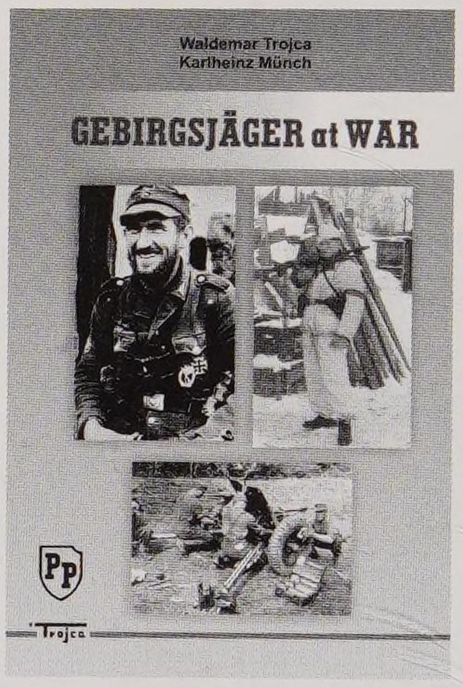

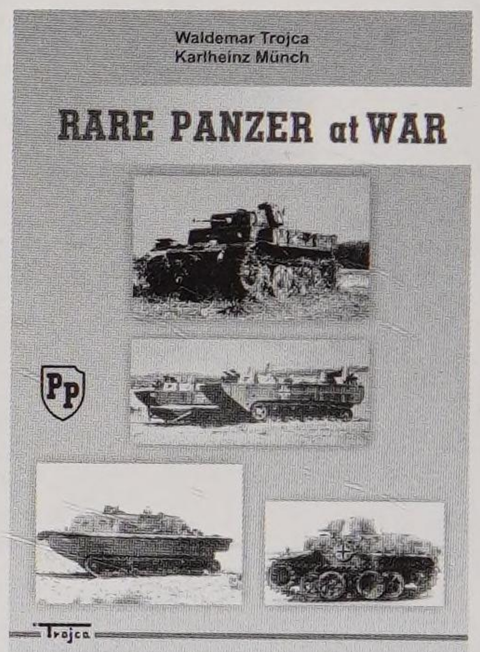

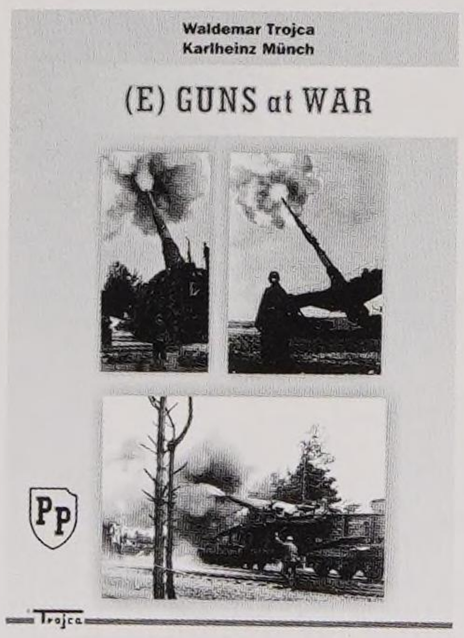

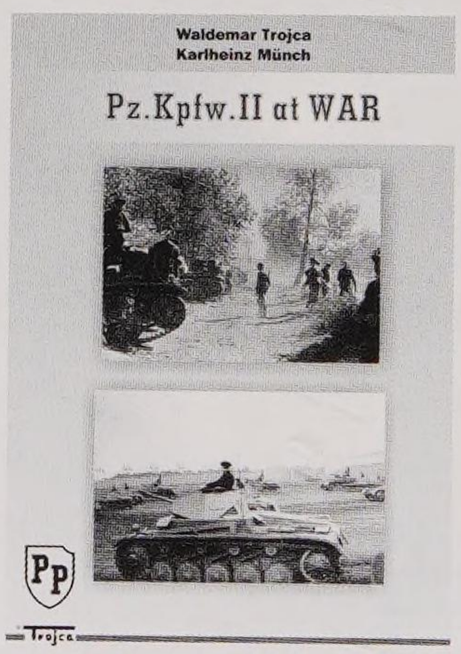

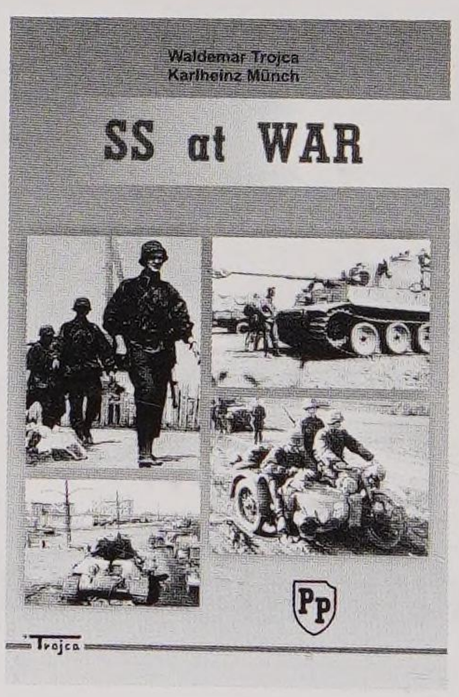

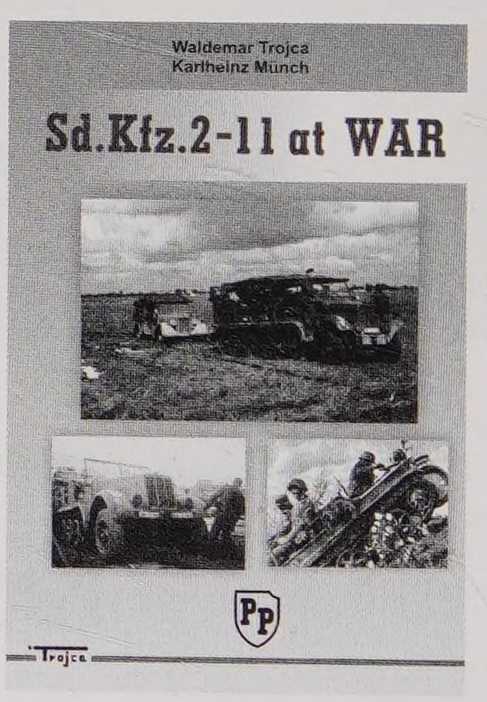

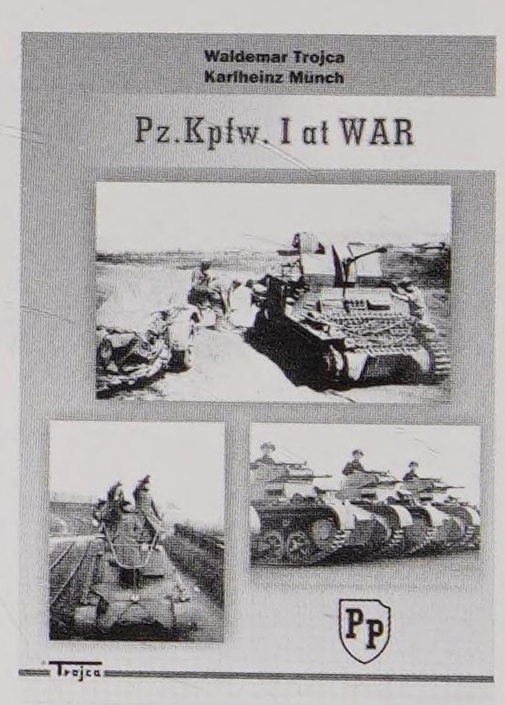

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Karlheinz Münch

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A Word of Thanks

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Foreword

It is the intention of the author of the book in front of the reader to provide a detailed account — in words and pictures - of *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197* of the German Armed Forces from 1940-1943. During the two and one half years of its existence, the battalion was employed exclusively on the Eastern Front, where it achieved considerable success. Its performance and accomplishments were recognized at the highest levels of command, and the battalion was selected at the turn of 1942/1943 to become the first assault-gun battalion of the German Armed Forces to be restructured as a heavy battalion. Although I reviewed the reorganization and redesignation of *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197* into *schwere Panzerjäger-Abteilung 653* in my book, The Combat History of schwere Panzerjäger-Abteilung 653 (published in 1997 by JJ Fedorowicz Publishing, Inc. of Winnipeg, Canada), I received considerable additional text and photo material concerning *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197* from former members of the battalion and their next-of-kin after the manuscript of the book was completed. The locating of an original personal daily log of the *1./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197*, which had somehow survived the rigors of the war, was a lucky happenstance. It is a valuable document of the times and, as such, has been taken almost completely in its entirety into this text. Although it is not certain, it is believed the daily log was maintained by *Feldwebel* Zielke, a clerk within both the battery and the battalion. The first-hand accounts, reminiscences and after-action report round out the picture of this seminal battalion of the assault artillery. Especially remarkable for me was the fact that a large portion of the photo material was available as original negatives. In spite of the dramatic situations and appalling conditions, by which the photos came about, the captivating quality of some of the photographs has remained to this very day. They show training activities as well as life in the rear area in addition to the hard fighting the battalion was involved in. They offer an unblinking look at the everyday life of the soldiers. The camera has permanently recorded all aspects of the battalion's history: The activation at Jüterbog, the peaceful march through Yugoslavia, the first movements against the Soviet Union and the Stalin Line and the difficult fighting around Kiev and Kharkov in 1941. The camera was also present when the battalion conducted its long march into the Crimea and the subsequent bitter struggles for the peninsula in 1941 and its subsequent capture in 1942. Even the terrible moments that record the deaths of comrades or of Soviet opponents have been recorded in an uncensored, documentary fashion. My thanks and respect are directed to all of the former personnel and next-of-kin of *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197* and *schwere Panzerjäger-Abteilung 653*, who have always followed my work with interest and have supported me greatly.

Karlheinz Münch
Schwetzingen
July 2006

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Anton Wickelmaier†, Willi Zimmermann (*Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197*)

Personal Daily Logs of the 1./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197 (Feldwebel Zielke) 25 November 1940 - 30 January 1943

It is fall in the war year of 1940.
During this time — it is the end of November 1940 — a twin pair of assault-gun battalions are being established by the [*VI./Artillerie-Lehr-Regiment* = Artillery Instructional Regiment] in Jüterbog. These are *Sturmartillerie-Abteilung 192* and *Sturmartillerie-Abteilung 197*.

On 22 November 1940, the duty-position rosters for both battalions, which had been approved by the [Army High Command] were announced during the farewell get-together for the officer course of the [*VI./Artillerie-Lehr-Regiment*]. The battalion commander of *Sturmartillerie-Abteilung 197* will be *Major* Helmut Christ; the adjutant will be *Oberleutnant* Hans Liedtke; and the battalion liaison officer will be *Oberleutnant* Adrian Gärtner. The commander of the [*1./Sturmartillerie-Abteilung 197*] will *Oberleutnant* Brinke. The following will be assigned to the 1st Battery as battery officers: *Leutnant* Wagner, *Leutnant* Spielmann, *Leutnant* Fellbier and *Oberleutnant* Adrian Gärtner. The date of activation is Monday, 25 November 1940. The location of activation is the New Camp at Jüterbog.

[Battalion] command and staff positions:
Headquarters Battery Commander: *Oberleutnant* Gerald de la Renotière.

[In the headquarters Battery:] *Leutnant* Kretschmer, *Leutnant* Seitz and *Leutnant* Preußer 2nd Battery
Battery Commander: *Oberleutnant* Fuhr

1st Platoon: *Leutnant* Kuntze

2nd Platoon: *Leutnant* Bobisch

3rd Platoon: *Leutnant* Salamon

3rd Battery

Battery Commander: *Oberleutnant* Goewe

1st Platoon: *Leutnant* Rehbein (effective 1 March 1941)

2nd Platoon: *Leutnant* Konnak

3rd Platoon: *Leutnant* Salamon

Battalion Engineer: *Kreigsverwaltungsrat* Rudolf Schaffranek

28 November 1940: Initially there has been some training on foot, even though without weapons. In addition, there has been instruction concerning the basic terms and concepts of the assault artillery. The officers finally moved from Camp "Adolf Hitler" to the New Camp today. Yesterday, the battalion commander discussed in detail differing questions concerning training and the relationships between superiors of different ranks.

29 November 1940: As of today, our battery is in proud possession of a staff car, slightly dinged up, to be sure, but otherwise capable of movement.

4 December 1940: The initial formation of the battalion was held by the commander today on the parade grounds in front of the [*Reich* Labor Service] barracks. The first staff cars arrived from Berlin. The battery received an *Opel "Super"*.

7 December 1940: With an effective date of 1 October 1940, *Wachtmeister* Wollermann and *Wachtmeister* Wegelin were promoted to *Leutnant*.

8 December 1940: Live hand grenades were employed today at the hand grenade range north of the New Camp.

12 December 1940: The radio operators are going to the Old Camp and the [*1./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 191*] to practice on the radio communications equipment there, since we still do not have any equipment ourselves.

18 December 1940: The battery celebrated with its Christmas Party today. Leave fever is spreading. Half of the officers are taking off today; the enlisted personnel have already been heading home by section for some days now.

2 January 1941: Our battery conducted its first instructional firing today at the Equipment Center (East)

3 January 1941: More gunnery, this time in the midst of driving snow and poor visibility. It was the first table firing [stepped firing exercises of increasing difficulty and complexity] for the battery; executed in the vicinity of Gallwitz Hill and Fort Ziethen.

11 January 1941: After a week of intensive training, the battery conducted its first combat-firing exercises today. The battalion commander was present for the firing. The battery fired well and fulfilled its training mission.

18 January 1941: Today, the battalion-level combat-firing exercise took place. It was conducted on the firing range at Jüterbog (in the area between the Equipment Center [East] — oriented towards Schmidt Hill — and Signal Hill; from there, it continued over Keller Hill through Dulitzhöhe as far as the line Löffelberg — Bölkemühle, where the enemy had pulled back). Our 1st Battery was able to demonstrate prowess at gunnery.

22 January 1941: The regimental commander inspected the vehicles of the battalion this afternoon.

24 January 1941: Today we started familiarity firing with small arms at the range in the Old Camp.

26 January 1941: The battalion reported it was ready to move. Everyone was anticipating the unknown future.

30 January 1941: Of late, the theoretical instruction took more and more of a back seat to unit-level training within the individual platoons and sections. As a result, the individual sections built cohesion and the bonds between the leaders and the soldiers were strengthened. The 2nd Platoon conducted an exercise early in the afternoon in the vicinity of Bürgermühle. The [training] situation called for the platoon to be integrated into the advance guard of an infantry regiment. It received the mission of breaking the resistance of the enemy, who had brought the advance to a standstill, and clearing the route for the continued advance. In spite of the cold winter weather, the exercise rolled on as planned. The [rest of the] battery watched the demonstration of the platoon.

4 February 1941: The battalion moved out. Although it was not to distant lands, as we had hoped, it was to Silesia, for the time being. We were to be quartered in Brieg in *Wehrkreis VIII* [Military District VIII]. Because the distance was so short, only the tracked vehicles were rail loaded. While the guns were being loaded in Zinna Forest, there was a tragic accident. *Unteroffizier* Wengenroth, the driver of "D" Gun, was caught between his own gun — which was being driven on Wengenroth's orders by the mechanic, *Oberkanonier* Krieg, who had no experience at driving — and the "C" Gun. He was immediately taken to the reserve hospital at Jüterbog.

5 February 1941: *Unteroffizier* Wengenroth died yesterday of his injuries.

6 February 1941: The battalion departed from the New Camp starting at 0830 hours: Headquarters, 1st Battery, 2nd Battery, 3rd Battery. The route initially went on *Reichsstraße 102* from Jüterbog to Dahme and Luckau and from there to the *Reich Autobahn.* It then proceeded along snowed-over, slippery surface through Kottbus-First to the exit at Triebel. On *Reichsstraße 122*, just outside of Triebel, a halt was made at a spot protected by the woods. The vehicles were fueled and lunch was eaten. At 1415 hours, we passed Triebel. We again reached the *Reich Autobahn* east of this town. The road march proceeded at speed through the snowed-over woods of the Lower Saxony Heath, past the Neuhammer Training Area, until we turned

west onto *Reichsstraße 115* west of Haynau. We parked on a side street at Haynau and spent the night in a hall of the *Gasthaus "Drei Berg"*. (Distance from Jüterbog to Haynau: 230 kilometers.)

7 February 1941: The departure from Haynau was set for 0830 hours. The thermometer was reading minus 15 decrees Celsius at the time [5 degrees Fahrenheit]. The departure took off without a hitch. Only the 2nd Battery lost contact with the elements ahead of it and got lost. We were moving through the foothills of the Bober-Katzbach Range, but we were soon received by the broad plain at Liegnitz. We then proceeded along snow-slick roads through large villages towards Brieg. We had been assigned to the *Mudra Kaserne*, a nice, new facility with spacious bays for the vehicles. (Distance from Haynau to Brieg: 160 kilometers.)

9 February 1941: A short memorial service was held in honor of *Unteroffizier* Wengenroth at 1100 hours. The battery commander praised the dead man in his eulogy and reminded us of our duty to persevere to victory.

10 February 1941: According to the [General Military Announcement dated] 7 February 1941, the assault-artillery battalions have been redesignated as assault-gun battalions. This means that we are now the *1./ Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197*. During the afternoon, the Commanding General, *General der Infanterie* Geyr, visited the post for a short time.

11 February 1941: We received a visit from a high-ranking officer at noon: The division commander, *Generalleutnant* Theißen, visited the battalion. Our battery moved to the drill grounds in close order. After a thorough inspection, the general had the officers of the battalion introduced by the battalion commander. He expressed his appreciation that it was his division that had been selected to receive this force, for which he believed that wherever it would be employed there would be something special going on.
All of the *262.Infanterie-Division* was hungry for that [something special].

17 February 1941: We were surprised by a short air-raid alert during the night of Saturday/Sunday.

20 February 1941: During the last few days, exercises within the platoons have been conducted in the surrounding area. Convoy training has been conducted with the trucks. *Leutnant* Ulbricht and his platoon have been detailed to the training area at Wischau near Brünn from 20 February to 8 March 1941. An exercise battery is being formed there from platoons from all three batteries. The acting battery commander is *Oberleutnant* Goewe (3rd battery). The investigating against *Oberkanonier* Krieg have been called off. A report concerning negligent homicide had been turned in against him. It was decided that *Oberkanonier* Krieg had acted properly and was, therefore, not responsible for the accident.

21 February 1941: An exercise took place at the Namslau Training Area from 1400 to 1720 hours on 19 February 1941 and again from 0930 to 1200 hours on 20 February 1941. It was with the *III./Infanterie-Regiment 192* (*56. Infanterie-Division*). The platoons of *Leutnant* Spielmann and *Leutnant* Wollermann took part under the supervision of the Battery Commander, *Oberleutnant* Brinke. The appearance of the assault guns evoke admiration from all of those present.

25 February 1941: A night road march was conducted yesterday. The trucks moved in convoy about 25 kilometers from Brieg through Jägerndorf, Lossen, Johnsdorf and Kreisewitz and then back to Brieg. The platoons marched separately on different roads.

3 March 1941: Today, a terrain walk was conducted in the vicinity of Heider for the tactics class. *Leutnant* Wagner had set up the exercise. The purpose of the exercises, among other things, was the acquisition of targets of opportunity and their textbook engagement by the gun commanders.

5 March 1941: A live-fire exercise was conducted yesterday at the Lamsdorf Training Area near Falkenberg. The platoons of *Leutnant* Spielmann and *Leutnant* Wollermann went there during the morning, accompanied by the Battery Commander. They occupied their ready positions and moved out to firing positions at the start of the attack by the *III./Infanterie-Regiment 192*. Unfortunately, our guns could not conduct live fire, since the range-safety requirements of the training area are too restrictive. As a result, the guns only demonstrated

their presence and simulated firing with practice rounds. The exercise was informative in another aspect as well: The ground was too soft. The guns bottomed out and became stuck. Of the four guns, three had to be recovered by 18-ton prime movers of the [battalion] headquarters after the exercise was over.

6 March 1941: Yesterday, we zeroed our rifles at the ranges at the village of Paulau. By far, the best shot was *Wachtmeister* Schrödel. This morning, a terrain exercise was conducted under the supervision of the Battery Commander. Setting up and conducting the exercise was done by *Leutnant* Spielmann (northeast of Brieg, using back-pack radios). The exercise went as planned up to the river basin of the Oder.

7 March 1941: The Battery Commander went to the Wischau Training Area today with *Leutnant* Wagner and the leader of the 3rd Platoon (*Leutnant* Wollermann). *Leutnant* Spielmann assumed duty as Acting Battery Commander. There was a radio exercise in the vicinity of Groß-Neudorf during the afternoon. All command vehicles and all armored ammunition carriers participated. The exercise suffered due to time constraints.

13 March 1941: Today there was another radio exercise [this time] in the Jessen area (southeast of Brieg). The situation called for the advance of an infantry division along two routes of advance and, the attendant radio traffic between the battery commanders, the platoons attached to their march serials and the "dismount" noncommissioned officers. The exercise went as planned. [The "dismount" noncommissioned officers were additional noncommissioned officers assigned to the batteries, who performed the function of a forward observer organic to the battery. This was in keeping with the artillery origins of the *Sturmartillerie*. This concept did not pan out in the field, when the assault guns rarely, if ever, conducted fire missions in an indirect-fire mode on the Eastern Front. The "dismount" noncommissioned officers were absorbed into the batteries to perform other duties, once the official decision was reached not to use them anymore. In German, they were referred to as *ausbootbare Unteroffiziere*.]

14 March 1941: The tactics class conducted a terrain walk on the Lessen Hills east of Brieg in the morning. Back-pack radios and scissors scopes were used to practice and critique the transmittal of commands between platoon leader or "dismount" noncommissioned officers and the gun commanders (clock method). The exercise demonstrated the great advantages of the clock method, which allows fire commands independent of the standpoint of the person issuing the orders.

19 March 1941: In the morning, there was a terrain walk and, in the afternoon, a radio exercise in the vicinity of Konradswaldau.

22 March 1941: In the morning, another large vehicle inspection was conducted, which proceeded in accordance with the plan previously made.

26 March 1941: A demonstration by an assault battery was conducted today around Oppeln. The 3rd Battery, supplemented by vehicles from the 1st Battery, moved there for inspection as a single element. The Commanding General of the *IX. Armee-Korps*, *General der Infanterie* Geyr, two other general officers and the officers of the *IX. Armee-Korps* watched the demonstration. After introductory remarks by the Battalion Commander, the gentlemen took a tour of the battery. In conclusion, an exercise was conducted together with an infantry battalion by the attached 2nd Battery (minus the 3rd Platoon). The exercise took place without a hitch. The Commanding General praised the set-up and execution and noted that the weaknesses of such an exercise lay in the peacetime conditions, which was the nature of the beast and could not be eliminated.

27 March 1941: Starting today, drivers and radio operators are being familiarized with the Cyrillic alphabet.

28 March 1941: The battery celebrated the birthday of its commander, *Oberleutnant* Brinke, today.

29 March 1941: The battalion was suddenly informed via a motorcycle messenger today to prepare a transportation request. The mood soared; everyone was looking forward to being employed.

30 March 1941: The battalion telephoned at 1030 hours [informing] the battery to be prepared to move immediately. The Battery Commander was of the opinion that he could report he was ready to move within five hours.

31 March 1941: The battalion will not be able to report it is ready to move until Tuesday.

5 April 1941: The week was spent waiting for our departure. Until the *R* and *SSK* rail cars arrive, the days are spent increasing our readiness to move out.

6 April 1941: The departure times for the units of the battalion have been announced. After a commanders' conference with the Battalion Commander, the [battalion] officers and special-duty noncommissioned officers have to be briefed.

7 April 1941: The battery departed the *Mudra* Base at 0830 hours for entraining at the Brieg freight station. Under supervision of the Transport officer, *Leutnant* Wagner, the entraining proceeded without incident, despite a steady downpour. Due to a shortage of locomotives, the loading took more than three hours, even though all the guns of the battalion had been assembled for a special train, *Transportzug "E"*. All of the noncommissioned officers and enlisted personnel of the battery were given until 2200 hours to find their way to *Transportzug "B"* within the freight yards.

8 April 1941: The train moved out at 0358 hours. The train departed Brieg, moving through Heydebreck to Oderberg. It then went past the Wittkowitz Iron Works in the direction of Moravian Strau. The countryside had a light cover of snow. There was the danger of frost. The radiator water threatened to freeze in some of the trucks. Consequently, the water was let out of all of the vehicles. The enlisted personnel were accommodated in comfort in passenger cars, and the field kitchen prepared a good meal. The journey proceeded in the direction of Moravia. The Jablunka and Jawornik Ranges and the White Carpathians framed the horizon. The snowstorm remained our steadfast companion. When night came on 8/9 April 1941, the train continued to trundle south; through Lundenburg and on towards Vienna. We reached Vienna at 0400 hours. Where would we head next? The rumor surface that we were going to Hungary. When we arrived at Wiener Neustadt after hours of detours, it was clear that we were headed somewhere in Styria [a province of Austria]. At 1100 hours, the train was at Gloggnitz am Semmering. A second locomotive was pushing from the rear. The long snake of rail cars pushed around curves, across viaducts and through vistas of the mountain stretch; it disappeared in tunnels and glided past the Semmering Station. A special train had been shunted off to the side there, which we slowly rolled past — supposedly the train of *Reichsmarschall* Göring. We then descended again and into the green valley of the Mürz River. From Bruck forward, the Mur River was our steadfast companion. Graz spread out in front of us, but the train continued to roll to the south. The trains stopped at the small village of Karlsdorf. It was our destination. It was 1430 hours. By 1650 hours, the vehicles had been offloaded, the coolant added and the midday meal over. The battery moved out on the road to Spielfeld. Not far from the border, in a feeder valley of the Mürz, the battery occupied quarters in Ehrenhausen at the *Gasthof "Zum Goldenen Löwen"*. The enlisted personnel slept on straw in the dance area; the officers and noncommissioned officers were distributed among private quarters in the village. The Battery Commander went ahead to the *132. Infanterie-Division*. We have been attached to this division. It belongs to the *LI. Armee-Korps* and the corps to the *2. Armee* (under the command of *Generaloberst Freiherr* von Weichs). (Distance from Karlsdorf to Ehrenhausen: 38 kilometers.)

10 April 1941: In the course of the day, the entire battalion arrived in and around Ehrenhausen. Unfortunately, the link-up with the advance guard of the *132. Infanterie-Division* cannot be effected, because the bridges over the Drau have been blown up. The engineer bridge (pontoon bridge) at Marburg only has a load capacity of 8 tons. That means we have to wait until a 16-ton bridge over the Drau can be emplaced somewhere. In the meantime, the battery gathered wood to serve as fascines that could be thrown under the tracks, if needed.

11 April 2006: The battalion had been prepared to move out since 1600 hours. At 2200 ours, the battalion moved up via Untervogau to the road crossing outside of Straß. It was intended for the battalion to integrate itself into *Marschgruppe Sommer* behind *Mörser-Abteilung 808*, so as to link up with the *132. Infanterie-Division* through Pettau. At approximately 2300 hours, an officer appeared in front of the bridge at Pettau, informing us that the bridge was not yet finished. The battalion then returned to its quarters. (March distance: 12 kilometers.)

13 April 1941: At 1400 hours on Saturday, 12 April, the battalion departed from Ehrenhausen. Order of march: Command Group, 1st Battery, 2nd Battery, 3rd Battery, Maintenance Section. The route of march went through Mureck; from there it went over the Mur, which formed the border. We proceeded around numerous curves uphill to Wölling. The building were abundantly decked out with swastika banners. From there, the route proceeded downhill to Gogonitz Creek. The creek paralleled the road and the route to St. Leonhard. Along the road to Pettau, the night engulfed us. The march increasingly slowed down; it finally fell into a deep slumber. Only the Easter bells ringing the following morning brought the army column back to life. The roads worsened continuously; the surface allowed only enough room for a single vehicle. As a result of the heavy loads of the mortar battalion, the road surface has been badly torn up; deep potholes required caution, and we only slowly approached the bridge at Pettau. Finally, the area around Windisch-Büheln was behind us. The march continued quickly across the level plains northeast of Pettau. We crossed a large, broken line of tank obstacles that had blackened bunker firing ports. We rolled through the small-town streets of Pettau and, just before 1400 hours, we were poised to cross the railway bridge. The engineers had repaired the demolished bridge, giving it a load capacity of 20 tons, and had removed the railway tracks. The [battalion] headquarters and the guns of our battery were at the rest area on the other side of the bridge at 1400 hours; but the ret of the battery did not follow up. That was because the assault engineers under the command of the Knight's Cross recipient *Oberstleutnant* Mikosch interrupted our battery; the assault engineers apparently had to get up front immediately. People were upset and there were delays. The meal was distributed and the soldiers rested. (Route distance from Ehrenhausen to Pettau: 50 kilometers)

14 April 1941: We did not stay long outside of Pettau. The march continued at 1545 hours. We went through rolling terrain through Lovrence to Rohitsch. We crossed the ridges of the Donacha Gora and were at the hairpin curve two kilometers east of Rock at midnight. We stopped there for a while. The roads are narrow and only marked to a bare minimum. The vehicles of the howitzer battalion that was moving ahead of us clogged the route. Finally, we took off again. We crossed the pass and the border of the former Lower Styria; we went into Croatia. We were told at Krapinske-Toplice that we had to go another 80 kilometers, since we were needed up front. We proceeded down to the Save, winding along numerous curves. We crossed the river at Podused on an iron-framed bridge and moved in a gigantic cloud of dust as far as the rail station at Jastrebarsko. We halted there. The battery assembled in front of the freight-yard station. We took quarters in the neighboring village of Cvetkovic. Although we would have preferred to continue marching to the front, the drivers and vehicles needed more than a short break. The village has a population of 2,000 and is inhabited by Croatians. In addition to a sleeping area in the community building, there were lots of private quarters. (Route distance from Pettau to Jastrebarsko: 183 kilometers.)

16 April 1941: After having had a chance to recover completely, the march continued at 1515 hours on Tuesday, 15 April 1941. It initially went across the Bug to Karlstadt (Karlovac). We saw our allies, the Italians, for the first time in the city. We continued to roll south across several bridges to Cvetkovic. Arrived there at 1730 hours. The battery soon set up quarters. Everyone thought he would have a peaceful night ahead of him, but suddenly we were told to continue the march. It was said that the *132. Infanterie-Division* had encountered resistance at the Una. We were hoping to get at the enemy, as a result. The departure took place at 2130 hours. We proceeded through mountainous terrain along deep creeks, moved across weak bridges and narrow, dusty roads without a break. We moved through Tusiovic, Vojnio, Kristinja and Bahaca. The truck column, which was following the guns with a 15-minute interval, went past the turn-off to Bahaca and had to move along the battalion route through Cetingrad to Kladusa. But it did not get any further than that. Since the Serbs had capitulated in the meantime, the rest of the march, which was to have gone as far as Otoka on the Una, was halted. The battalion moved into the area around Gojcova. At 0700 hours, the truck column finally got to the designated spot as well. (March route from Cvetkovic to Gojcova: 88 kilometers) The orderly room and mess truck had either gone off the road or turned on its side, but they were able to get back on a firm surface again without the help of a prime mover. Kunesch, a motorcycle messenger, disappeared along the way between Kladusa and Cetingrad. Attempts to find him have met with no success up to this point. We are now on Bosnian turf. The buildings are primitive; the people are dirty and have a rag-tag appearance. Tents are erected and cheaply procured chickens are boiled and roasted.

17 April 1941: We have been moved back to Karlstadt. The departure was at 0620 hours. Because a tank on a low boy caused a bridge at Bahaca to partially collapse, it was necessary to take a detour around Topolsko. Karlstadt was reached at 1300 hours, after a fairly brisk march. We assembled on meadowlands outside of the city. The gymnasium of a middle school offered quarters for the enlisted personnel; the officers and noncommissioned officers took up private quarters. (Distance from Gojcova to Karlstadt: 83 kilometers.)

19 April 1941: Friday and Sunday passed rapidly. The vehicles had maintenance performed on them. Kunesch, the motorcycle messenger, caught up with us. He had ridden as far as Otoka on the Una. The streets of Karlstadt offered a colorful mixture of uniforms and native costumes. Germans, Italians and members of the newly formed Croatian Army walked through the facilities of the fortress city. There was a lot of singing and drinking in the pubs. The businesses posted large a large volume of sales.

20 April 1941: We moved out of Karlstadt on the morning of the birthday of the *Führer*. We were integrated into the march group of *Artillerie-Regiment 785*, which consisted of *Artillerie-Regiment 785*, *Artillerie-Regiment 536* and our battalion. The battalion marched as follows: Headquarters, 3rd battery, 2nd Battery, 1st Battery. The route proceeded through Novaki to Jastrebarsko. Enjoying good weather, we then crossed the Save at Podused. After that, we moved along the curvy route to Krapinske-Toplice and through the mountains to Krapina. When arriving in Rogatec, we could tell by the swastika flags that we had left the red-white-blue Croatia and were again on the soil of regained Lower Styria. Outside of Podplat — as we were able to see the plains in front of us — a gun from the 3rd Battery that had broken down blocked the way. It was pulled off to the side by one of our guns. Night fell outside of Windisch-Feistrit.
Quarters were taken at Sv. Hoce. (Day's march: 180 kilometers.)

21 April 1941: Under a downpour, we departed the Slovenian village of Sv. Hoce at 1040 hours. The march route then went to Marburg (Maribor), where the Drau was crossed. We then followed the Drau up stream on the left bank; to our left, the roaring river, to the right, the cliffs. Moving through Merenberg, we reached Unterdrauburg (Dravograd). We crossed the old border of the *Reich* there and entered the province of Carinthia. The march objective of the day, the village of Ruden, was reached at 1930 hours. Tents are being erected. All of the vehicles of the battery have made it this far so far. Unfortunately, an incident occurred: *Obergefreiter* König got caught between the track and the mudguards of a moving gun, in the process of which, the skin from his posterior was ripped off. Despite this, he was still fortunate! (March distance from Sv. Hoce to Ruden: 97 kilometers.)

22 April 1941: We departed the Ruden Valley at 0600 hours. We proceeded through Völkermarkt — where a wonderful bridge made out of stone spanned the broad valley — to Klagenfurt. Downfalls prevented any view of the mountain terrain, however. From Klagenfurt, we proceeded to the northern edge of Lake Wörth, along which a good asphalt road ran — *Reichsstraße 116*. Moving through Velden, we reached the city of Villach, our march objective, around noon. The battery assembled in a schoolyard.

23 April 1941: Ninety per cent of the battery has been set up in private quarters. The remaining enlisted personnel are sleeping in the elementary school, where the vehicles of the battery are located.
Routine maintenance has been scheduled for the vehicles.

27 April 1941: Now all of the battery has been quartered in private homes. Today, the *Führer*, Adolf Hitler, traveled through Villach on his return from the liberated Lower Styria. he was greeted jubilantly at the train station by representatives of the state, the party, the armed forces and the general populace of Villach.

28 April 1941: *Wachtmeister* Rehbein has been promoted to *Leutnant*, with an effective date of 1 March 1941. He will be transferred to the 3rd battery to replace *Leutnant* Reinstädter.

29 April 1941: Under the supervision of *Leutnant* Spielmann, the radio operators, gun personnel and truck drivers went through Velden to Maria-Wörth this afternoon. After a break for coffee and cake at the *Hotel "Zur Linde"*, the afternoon was spent with boat rides, table tennis and tours of the local sights, all under a pleasant sun.

30 April 1941: The battery has continued to perform maintenance. During the morning, *Kriegsverwaltungsrat* (A *Kreigsverwaltungsrat* was a civilian official entrusted with the maintenance posture of the battalion.) Schaffranek inspected the vehicles of the battery, while the battery commander had maintenance conducted. During the afternoon, replacements arrived from Schweinfurt.

1 May 1941: Today the battery's handball team played against the 11 of an engineer company of *Pionier-Bataillon 51*. With a score of 21:1, we had to admit we had been defeated.

2 May 1941: The Battery Commander went with the other part of the battery to Lake Wörth today.

3 May 1941: The noncommissioned officer corps, led by the Battery Commander, climbed the *Dobratsch* (also known as the Alp of Villach), 2,100 meters above sea level.

5 May 1941: The three gun platoons went to Lake Millstadt today under the supervision of their Platoon Leaders.

9 May 1941: Preparations for the battery to depart were conducted on Tuesday. The battery assembled on Wednesday at 0500 hours. The departure for the west train station took place at 0545 hours. The train started to be loaded at 0600 hours. Once again, the guns were consolidated with those of the other batteries for a special train. The departure was delayed due to problems on the railway's end and did not take place until 1200 hours. The route proceeded initially though St. Veit an der Glan to Bruck an der Mur. From there, it proceeded along the main stretch across the Semmering to Vienna. We crossed the Danube on the morning of 8 May 1941 and proceeded through Lundenburg into the *Reich* Protectorate and Brünn. We crossed the borders of the *Reich* Protectorate again at Brusou and proceeded through the eastern portion of the Sudeten Province via Zwittau and into the Glatz district, after crossing the border several times. We were informed we had reached our destination. A light coat of frost was on the trees. The initial disappointment was soon over. The vehicles were quickly unloaded by means of the long side ramps at the train station. The radiators, which had partially frozen, quickly thawed out. The road march to Glatz started at 0730 hours. We went to the *Moltke* Base (Home base of *Infanterie-Regiment 38*).

17 May 1941: Duty in the *Moltke* Base took into consideration not only the requirements for the maintenance of the vehicles and equipment but also those for forming cohesiveness among the enlisted personnel and expansion of technical prowess on the weapons. In order to achieve these goals, the duty day was initially lengthened somewhat. The accommodations in the not exactly new but nonetheless well-built facilities were extraordinarily satisfactory. The vehicles were also accommodated sufficiently well. The city itself, with its 25,000 inhabitants, offers lots of activities and a variety of diversions. The city on the road is crowned by the fortress of Frederick the Great, which even today gives the city the stamp of a Prussian garrison town. An additional five replacements arrived on 14 May 1941 from Schweinfurt.

19 May 1941: A terrain walk took place today at the local training area, which is located east of the base and adjoins it. It is overlooked by the old mountain bastion. Functioning as the exercise leader, the Battery Commander simulated the employment of an assault platoon. Using the clock method, the 2nd Platoon of *Leutnant* Ulbricht engaged and eliminated the targets of the enemy command (under *Leutnant* Wagner).

21 May 1941: In the morning, the Battery Commander supervised vehicle maintenance. The inspection resulted in complete satisfaction. Even *Kreigsverwaltungsrat* Schaffranek did not hold back in his praise on the condition of the vehicles of the battery. In recognition of this, the drivers were released from duty for the afternoon.

23 May 1941: Today firing under selected conditions (150 meters; prone; non-supported) was conducted at the ranges behind the Moltke Base. During the afternoon, the armored prime movers were steered cross-country to train the replacement drivers. The replacement radio operators practiced the reception of radio traffic during this exercise.

27 May 1941: A large-scale radio exercise was conducted today. All command vehicles, armored ammunition vehicles and *Sd.Kfz. 15's* took part. Glatz was the start point, and it proceeded between the Neiße River and the Reichstein Range as far as the town of Wartha. Using a common frequency, the employment of the platoons and "dismount" noncommissioned officers was tested. The radio traffic for observed fire to the battery leader that was routed through another platoon was done for the first time.

28 May 1941: Yesterday, our battery invited all of the fair sex of Glatz to the "Tailor's Hut" for its farewell event in the evening. Motivated by the musically gifted *"Wollermann"* band, all of the enlisted personnel had the chance to shake a leg. Terrific skits, enriched by humor and imagination, were presented to great acclaim by *Gefreiter* Dorsch, *Kanonier* Maslowski and others. The best dancer proved to be *Gefreiter* Köhler. In good humor, there was a fair amount of tippling, and the good mood got better as the nigh wore on, until the rising sun illuminated the abandoned hut.

29 May 1941: The battery prepared for its departure from Glatz. Tomorrow, Friday, 30 May 1941, we are supposed to depart with an unknown destination. Our battery will form the 2nd train. The battalion's guns will be consolidated again on a special train.

30 May 1941: The battery was in Rengersdorf at 0730 hours on Friday, waiting to load on the train. The entraining proceeded rapidly under the leadership of the Movement Officer, *Leutnant* Spielmann. Departure, which was supposed to have occurred at 1039 hours, started at 0959 hours. The train took us towards Glatz again. We then proceeded through Wertha and out of the shire. The Kamenz Palace appeared with its reinforced towers; the waves of man-made Lake Ottengau lapped against the railway embankment. Neiße was left behind us. The *Bischofskoppe* near Nerstadt greeted us as the last mountain of the Sudeten territory. We crossed the narrow Oder at Kosel. Heydebreck was reached. We then headed south to Ratibor, where the locomotives were changed at 1730 hours. As the sun sank, we rolled towards Oderberg. It was there that we had headed south on 8 April 1941; now we were going east! The land and the people turned "eastern". A small river was crossed; it was the Vistula. There was another locomotive change at Dzieditz. Then the weak shadowy outlines of the Beskieden Range, which ran south of the rail line, disappeared in the evening twilight. At 2200 hours, we saw the lights of Krakow, which was not blacked out. The train continued to tramp eastward. The gray of the new day stood lazily over a wretched train station. Its name was Rzeszow (Reichshof), 60 kilometers from Przemysl as the crow flies. We were at our destination. We unloaded at 0500 hours. Ragged Jews carted away the pieces of the tie-down blocks that had been knocked off. The battery was soon able to depart. We proceeded north through Sakalow-Jezewe. We turned east there. Outside of Krzeszow, we crossed the San. We linked up with the 2nd Battery in the village itself. The Battalion Commander issued orders to continue the march. With a time interval of 30 minutes, we followed the 2nd Battery along a military road through Biljeraj, Szezebrzeszyn and Zawada to Zamosc. A noon break was taken at a meadow there. We then went through the Jewish section of the village on the road to Hrubieszow. We soon had to turn off the road and move south. We were greeted by a farmer's trail with bottomless holes. Our battery proceeded fairly well across this stretch, since we were the lead battery. The 2nd battery, which was supposed to have been in the lead, took another route. It proved to be so bad that we were able to pass it despite going slower. The village of Terebia appeared, then it continued on another 7 kilometers on a road just as bad. We assembled along a side road of the village in Sahryn. We had arrived at our destination. The quarters had already been selected by the advance party. The entire battery was able to be quartered in the village proper. It turned out that this was better than we had expected. The march had taken place without incident. A few trucks and motorcycles were held up for a short period of time by minor problems. The weather is sunny and dry, but there inordinate amounts of dust. (March distance from Reichshof to Sahryn: 214 kilometers.)

1 June 1941: The Battalion Headquarters, the Headquarters Battery, the 2nd Battery and the 3rd Battery have been quartered in nearby Turkowice. A land line has been laid to the 2nd Battery. The connection to the battalion is made from there. The guns appeared about 1515 hours.

2 June 1941: The battery worked at the "parking lot", an untilled field. After a move of some consequence, the vehicles are brought back up to standard again. During this last movement, the roadwheels of the guns suffered considerable damage. A pig was purchased today and slaughtered. An oven to cook it was constructed out of bricks that were acquired quickly. The pig will soon be simmering away in the pan…

6 June 1941: The vehicles changed location. They were moved under the protection offered by the high shade trees that are grouped around the Greek Orthodox church in the village. (The village has about 1,200 inhabitants. The old village is primarily inhabited by Greek-Orthodox Ukrainians, while the many collectives that came about on large estates that were divided up during the Polish reign are completely occupied by Poles.)

9 June 1941: The Ukrainians celebrated their Pentecost yesterday and today, thus showing us their religious rituals and national customs. We slaughtered a young steer. Beer from Lublin was also available. There was a promotion: *Obergefreiter* Gottschalk was promoted to *Unteroffizier*.

13 June 1941: Another pig was purchased Wednesday. Personal demand items can be purchased from *Unteroffizier* Schmidt, who runs the field exchange. The vehicles are once again roadworthy. The fuel vehicles arrived today with full canisters from the MJG gas station at Cholm. A construction detail from our battery under the supervision of *Leutnant* Ulbricht has improved the trail to the road to Zamosc. Communications to the south with the men of the construction company and the personnel of our battery are being secured under the supervision of *Leutnant* Ulbricht.

20 June 1941: The battery was detached from the battalion and moved out of its previous assembly area (1.5 kilometers northeast of Leszokow) at 2130 hours to its new one ("Handkerchief Woods", 1.7 kilometers west of the southern outskirts of Chorobrow). It has been attached to the *75. Infanterie-Division*, part of the *XXXXVIII. Armee-Korps (mot.)*. Before the [battery's] departure, a farewell formation was held in front of the Battalion Commander, *Major* Christ. *Leutnant* Konnak joined the battery today from the 3rd Battery. After a rapid move, the battery got to its new assembly area at 2215 hours. The vehicles were put up for the night. The pitching of tents had already been started by an advance party.

21 June 1941: The battery was awakened at 0600 hours. The vehicles were then camouflaged and protective dugouts were established at the wood line. The Commanding General, *General* Kaempfe, arrived at 0900 hours for a short visit. Following that, the Battery Commander went to a conference with *Infanterie-Regiment 202* along with the platoon leaders, the battery officer and *Leutnant* Konnak. The battery headquarters and the line elements departed at 2000 hours. At 2030 hours, the exhortation of the *Führer* to the Eastern Front was read aloud by the *Hauptwachtmeister* [Battery First Sergeant].

22 June 1941: 0315 hours: Artillery fire and the employment of rockets on Sokal and the high ground to its northeast. The battery was prepared to move out along the road in Zabuze, parallel to the Bug River. At 0350 hours, the battery crossed the river on the bridge at Sokal — the last battery of the battalion. The bridge was in the sector of the *57. Infanterie-Division*; correspondingly, the battery had to move to the left to get into the sector of the *75. Infanterie-Division* and *Infanterie-Regiment 202*. After the crossing, the Battery Commander had the following message sent to all of the platoons: "Main road not clear of the enemy. Attempt to get through along other routes!" The platoons then turned to the right through the gardens to the northeastern outskirts of Sokal, which was on fire, to a brickworks. *Infanterie-Regiment 202* was in position there engaging strong bunkers. As a result of the intervention of our guns, the machine-gun nests emplaced in front of the bunkers could be destroyed; the bunkers themselves were only temporarily quieted. As a result, the 2nd Platoon received the order to bypass the line of bunkers and the tank ditch to the right and go to the road to Tartakow. The 1st Platoon bypassed the bunkers to the left; the 3rd Platoon followed the 2nd Platoon. The 2nd Platoon fought with the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 202* left of the Sokal — Tartakow road. After hard fighting, the platoon went to Horbkow. *Oberwachtmeister* Foth of the 1st Platoon was the first soldier of the battery to be killed when he was hit in the head at pointblank range in his gun. We proceeded to Tartakjow against moderate resistance. Heavy antitank-gun fire had to be eliminated there. There was a short halt, since friendly artillery was still falling on Tartakow. The 2nd Platoon remained behind in Tartakow to screen to the northeast. After an hour, the 1st and 3rd Platoons moved as far as Tartakowice, where they wound up in artillery fire lasting five hours. They were employed twice in the course of the afternoon. While eliminating a heavy battery, which was fixing our infantry in its positions, two [enemy] armored cars were destroyed and another one was damaged. The second employment of the 2nd Platoon occurred as the result of a counterattack by the Russians from the northeast. The attack was turned back, and a light battery and two antitank guns were destroyed. In the evening, the battery was pulled back to the palace grounds of Tartakow. It spent a quiet night there. The rest of the battery was awakened at 0330 hours. It remained for the time being in the "Handkerchief Woods". Only the battle staff — consisting of the three back-up crews and an 18-ton prime mover with a lowboy — were already moving through Sokal to the combat elements in the morning. At 2030 hours, all of the trains moved through Chorobrow — Opulsko to Zabuse. It arrived there at 2400 hours. (Distance: 12 kilometers.) The roads were largely blocked by advancing columns.

23 June 1941: At approximately 0300 hours, the 3rd Platoon was moved up to the northeastern outskirts of Tartakow, in order to screen against a feared Russian counterattack. After three hours, the battery moved as a flank guard for *Infanterie-Regiment 202* to Cerwiatyze. In the process, the Platoon Leader of the 2nd Platoon, *Leutnant* Ulbricht, was received a grazing wound to the head. From there on, we proceeded cross-country to Ochlopow. An advance guard was formed there under the command of *Oberleutnant* Brinke. It consisted of the *2./Infanterie-Regiment 202* (a bicycle company), two platoons of antitank guns and our battery. There was initially a small engagement with the Russian rearguard. Following that, we proceeded to Cechow without encountering any enemy. There, however, the advance guard encountered resistance. After hard fighting in the village, in the course of which several neighboring villages caught on fire, the infantry

and the guns cleared it of the enemy. "E" Gun surprised two Russian howitzers, which were just about to depart, along the narrow village street. A few rounds sufficed to capture the guns and their running tractors. We then proceeded on to Choloniow. The wooded parts of the village were searched for Russian tanks that were supposedly there — to no avail. A bridgehead was then established over the creek; the battery spent the night there. The trains were awakened at 0400 hours. The vehicles were reorganized. At 0645 hours, a Russian air attack took place on the bridge at Sokal. While being overflown by the Russian bombers, the battery crossed the Bug without being halted. The path then led to Horbkow. *Oberwachtmeister* Foth was buried. The ammunition elements and the combat trains then moved through Tartakow, Knicze and Druzkopol to Cechow, following the combat elements. The combat trains stopped outside of Cechow and set up security until the resistance in the village was broken. Following that, we proceeded to Cholnorow, arriving there at 2030 hours.

24 June 1941: Wake up at 0300 hours. The combat trains departed immediately to move forward through Zwiniacze, Holatyn and Lipa to Boromel. The Russians put up resistance in Holatyn-Dolny. They had to be yanked out of buildings and hedges. We then advanced with negligible resistance as far as Boromel on the Styr River. It was difficult to establish a bridgehead due to the fact that the Russians had burned the bridge. A false alarm during the evening forced the guns to the northern outskirts of the village. But the expected Russian attack did not materialize. The battery spent a quiet night. The trains were awakened again at 0400 hours. The combat trains moved out again at 0815 hours through Zwiniaze, Holatyn and Lipa to Boromel on the Styr.

25 June 1941: The trains entered Boromel at 0415 hours under the leadership of *Hauptwachtmeister* Wohlmuth, but moved back to Lipa at 0500 hours. During the morning, the battery came back from Boromel. The infantry's 4-ton bridge could not be used there. As a result, a detour had to be made through Lipa without *Infanterie-Regiment 202*. Three guns got over the bridge at Lipa, which had been reinforced on orders of *Leutnant* Wagner, but it still collapsed. In the course of the day, these three guns continued to advance with the command and control vehicles through Beresteczko, where the Styr was crossed. They went to Plaszowa and, from there, through Werben to Lopawaze. They spent the night there. The remaining guns and the trains remained at Lipa and waited for the bridge to be repaired. The battery was returned to the command and control of the battalion.

26 June 1941: The battery departed in separate columns. The 1st Platoon headed to Mylnow. A battalion-sized advance guard had taken this village without heavy weapons. The Russians had committed a regiment of snipers into the fighting, causing an extremely difficult situation to arise. Our 1st Platoon was providing the urgently needed help. Bitter fighting ensued. When his submachine gun malfunctioned, *Leutnant* Spielmann cracked the skull of a Russian with it. (It should be mentioned that the submachine gun was also lost in the process.) *Leutnant* Spielmann was then slightly wounded. Late in the afternoon, the 3rd Platoon was also committed to the fighting there. In the course of an attack carried out that same evening by the platoon, *Leutnant* Wollermann, the Platoon Leader, was killed. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons advanced further in the direction of Smordwa. Nothing worthy of note occurred there. The 3rd Platoon will be brought forward to Mlynow later. On this day, the trains moved as far forward as Smordwa, where the battery — minus the 1st and 3rd Platoons, which remained in position around Mlynow — rested.

27 June 1941: A day of rest for the 2nd Platoon and the trains at Smordwa. The 1st and 3rd Platoons remained in position around Mlynow; there was no fighting, however. During the afternoon, *Leutnant* Wollermann was buried at the cemetery at Mlynow.

28 June 1941: The battery departed at 1000 hours. March route: Smordwa, Boknyma, Kosin, Sitno. A collision with enemy tanks outside of Sitno. The battery advanced out of a small patch of woods, where a regimental headquarters and a battery of Model 18 light field howitzers was located. There was a hefty firefight with the Russian tanks just behind the patch of woods. The Russian tanks were on the road to Sitno. This road was swarming with trucks. A Russian tank was eliminated, but "C" Gun (*Unteroffizier* Wirkner) was disabled when it was hit. There were no losses within the gun itself; however, *Gefreiter* Stammen, who was standing next to it, was wounded. In addition to our battery, the 2nd Battery also participated in this firefight. The 12 guns, all firing in line, presented a powerful image! The trains also moved out at 1000 hours. There was a delay, resulting in the actual departure not taking place until 2030 hours. March route: Smordwa, Bokupna, then the tank road and through Danidowka until just outside of Ostrow. From there, we proceeded cross country to Kosin and then further to Soweruki, where we bedded down. *Kanonier* Frenzel had an accident with his motorcycle and had to be taken to the hospital.

29 June 1941: Advance through Sitno, Adramowka and Kopanse as far as Kruki. Sitno was full of shot-up tanks and trucks. It was a portrait of the most terrible kind of havoc there. There had been firing to good effect by concentrated German artillery fires among the enemy columns. The advance continued, with infantry mounted on the guns. The trains departed Sawozuki at 1430 hours and arrived at Iwaszezuki at 0915 hours. Departed again at 1430 hours. At 2045 hours, advanced through Sitno, Adamowski and Kopanse to Kruki. The trains arrived at 0430 hours (on 30 June 1941) in Kruki. There was considerable Russian air activity this day.

30 June 1941: rest in Kruki. The combat elements advanced as far as Taraz-Stary on the Ikwa River at 1730 hours. The river was not crossed by the battery. It spent the night in Taraz-Stary. The trains remained in Kruki. *Unteroffizier* Deffner was wounded by an unfortunate occurrence when he unloaded a weapon.

1 July 1941: The advance to the east continued; two enemy tanks were eliminated in the process. The trains departed Kruki at 0745 hours and arrived at Taraz-Stary at 1000 hours.

2 July 1941: The Battery Commander, *Oberleutnant* Brinke, is suffering from angina. *Leutnant* Wagner, has assumed [acting] command; *Leutnant* Fellbier now has the 3rd Platoon. The battery was employed to relieve forces surrounded in Katrynburg, including the 2nd Platoon of the *2./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197*. At 1830 hours, orders arrived at the trains location from the battalion, indicating that the battalion was being pulled out of the line and would be attached in the future to the *LV. Armee-Korps*. Our battery was directed to the wooded area south of the row of buildings along the southern outskirts of Horynka, on the Horynka — Wicsowiec road, as a rest area. The combat elements moved to Horynka.

3 July 1941: At 0915 hours, the trains also arrived at Horynka; later on, the maintenance section. The combat elements occupied a new assembly area. It was announced that the battery had been attached to the *XXXXIII. Armee-Korps* and had to get ready to move immediately. The battery reported, however, that it could not move out immediately: four guns had to be calibrated. The roadwheels needed to be changed on one gun and, finally, two guns were still with the maintenance section.

4 July 1941: The entire battery spent the night in the woods south of Horynka. The wheeled vehicles had to be towed to the road by the half-tracked and fully tracked vehicles, because the ground in the woods — but also that of the road as well — has become completely bottomless as a result of the continuous rain. The wheeled vehicles were outfitted with chains. The combat elements moved to Wiesniowiec Nowy at 1515 hours and, from there, to Wirzbowiec. The trains marched an hour later to Wiesniowiec.

5 July 1941: Departure: 0830 hours. March route: Wiersbowiec — Kornazowka — Packinia — Wlaszczynce. Arrival: 1030 hours. The trains remained in Wiesniowiec Nowy.

6 July 1941: The battery has been attached to the *9. Infanterie-Division*. Departure at 0530 hours to Bialazerko. We then proceeded over the former Russian-Polish border together with the *III./Infanterie-Regiment 36*. There were a few abandoned bunkers just behind the border. In the broad expanse of terrain, only a couple of fleeing Russian infantry are all that can be seen of Russia's army. In the evening, *Oberleutnant* Brinke arrived at the battery. He took back command immediately. The battery spent the night in a small patch of woods near Basalja. The trains moved out at 1300 hours from Wiesniowiec and arrived at Bialazerko at 2100 hours. Bialazerko is 3.8 kilometers away from the old Russian-Polish border. March route of the trains: Wiesniowiec — Wyzgerdek — Buhlow — Bialazerko (march distance: 45 kilometers).

7 July 1941: The battery continued its advance as far as Klitenka Mala. The trains also went there (march distance: 35 kilometers).

8 July 1941: The battery formed an advance guard along with a platoon of antitank guns and a bicycle troop. Advanced as far as Cyceniowka. A column of Russian trucks was surprised and eliminated there. The battery pursued the enemy on all sides and took numerous prisoners. The trains departed Klitenka Mala at 0745 hours and linked up with the battery at Wronkowce at 1645 hours. It spent the night there.

9 July 1941: The combat elements moved to Swinia and spent the night of 9/10 July 1941 there. The trains did not change position this time.

10 July 1941: The battery advanced together with the *I./Infanterie-Regiment 57*. In the beginning, the advance encountered no resistance. Enemy bunkers were reported at Ladyhy. A few of the prisoners talked about an extended line of bunkers. The battery has run into the Stalin Line. An infantry patrol was sent against an enemy bunker to determine whether the enemy was determined to offer resistance. *Unteroffizier* Raydt accompanied the patrol with a backpack radio. Initially, it did not look like there would be resistance. Two Russians, who came out of a bunker, ran away immediately. But those hopes proved to be false. The enemy soon started to fire. The patrol, located completely in the open on the flat ground, was in a miserable situation. The 3rd Platoon was employed to relieve the force. It was able to execute the operation without casualties. The engine gave out on the "F" Gun when it was right in front of a bunker and it could not move. The "E" Gun raced to its aid and towed it out [of danger]. The enemy fired heavily the entire day with artillery and mortars. The battery spent the night in Ladyhy. The trains marched from Woronokowec to Samczyk, where it arrived at 1745 hours. (March distance: 38 kilometers.)

11 July 1941: There was heavy enemy artillery fire within the battery area during the night. Ammunition Vehicle "CD" was damaged by a 15.2-centimeter artillery shell. Attack at 1500 hours with the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 57*. The Stalin Line was penetrated. The breakthrough through the actual line of bunkers went relatively quickly, but there was heavy fighting afterwards. The trains spent the night in Samczyk. The onset of Russian artillery fire around noon caused the trains to look for another staging area away from the southern outskirts of the village and in the woods along the side of the road.

12 July 1941: Advance: Ladyhy — Kalinowka — Ostropol — Josefowka — Pyski. The trains remained in Samczyk.

13 July 1941: The battery advanced as far as Jablonka. The battery attacked there along with the *I./Infanterie-Regiment 57*. The enemy positions were taken. Heavy artillery fire occasionally fell on the high ground that had been taken. *Leutnant* Wagner was injured by shrapnel in the process. The trains departed Samczyk at 1130 hours and got as far as Pyzki by way of Kalinowka and Ostropol (march distance: 28 kilometers).

14 July 1941: The combat elements advanced; march as far as Ulanow. The trains broke camp at 1200 hours and marched via Jablonowka, Marjanowka and Lahuca to Ulanow (march distance: 45 kilometers).

16 July 1941: The combat elements moved with the *I./Infanterie-Regiment 57* via Lusna — where the "B" Gun became disabled — and Roginzy to Kustowzy (the latter part under heavy rainfall). At Kustowzy, the battery received a special mission, along with *Aufklärungs-Abteilung 9*. The attack was continued on Wajna. The battery remained there.

17 July 1941: The combat elements remained in Wajna. The trains marched from Ulanow to Woconince (8 kilometers). The unending rain has turned the paths into bottomless pits and forced the trains to spend the night in Woconince.

18 July 1941: The combat elements and the trains remained in the old position.

19 July 1941: The combat elements remained in Wajna. The unimproved roads, which have become untrafficable as a result of the continuous rain, have forced the trains to continue their march in a northerly direction. Departure: 1100 hours. March route: Woconince — Ulanow — Prikowce — Bajgrosodek — Barditschew — Markanowka. Arrival in Markanowka at 1900 hours. *Oberleutnant* Brinke received the Iron Cross, First Class. In addition, 13 Iron Crosses, Second Class, were awarded to members of the combat elements.

20 July 1941: At 0800 hours, the combat elements headed out towards Markanowka, with the result that the entire battery was there. It was said that the village had 5,000 inhabitants?! It is a miserable village.

21 July 1941: Day of rest in Markanowka.

22 July 1941: Day of rest in Markanowka.

23 July 1941: Departed at 0400 hours to the new assembly area. March route: Markanowka — Berditschew — Shitomir — road to Kiev as far as Szitnjuki. That was about 150 kilometers. The battery arrived at Szitnjuki at 1730 hours.

24 July 1941: The combat elements marched to Andrejewka and reported in to *Infanterie-Regiment 50*. An operation planned against the rail line there could not be carried out due to rotted-out bridges. The combat elements remained in Andrejewka; the trains at Szitnjuki.

25 July 1941: Day of rest. Lively artillery activity.

26 July 1941: Day of rest. Little artillery activity.

27 July 1941: The Battery Commander, who has suffered with a problem in his eyes since the 25th of this month, had to go to the hospital at Shitomir. *Leutnant* Spielmann assumed acting command of the battery. Heavy artillery fire forced him to move the battery back from Andrejewka to Lipowka.

28 July 1941: Day of rest. The attack order for 30 and 31 July 1941 arrived at 2030 hours. The battery has been attached to *Infanterie-Regiment 70*.

29 July 1941: Day of rest.

30 July 1941: The combat elements departed a 0345 hours from the assembly area at Lipowka. They moved through Korolowka and Osjorschischina to the north in order to occupy a jump-off point for the attack on the Kiev — Olewak rail line, as specified by the orders of the *111. Infanterie-Division*. *Leutnant* Spielmann led the battery, which moved out with two platoons, each with two guns. The battery arrived at Osjorschischina around 0500 hours as morning fog rose — the approach thus remained hidden to the enemy. Without stopping there, the elements proceeded to the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 70*. Crossing a bridge, they moved on the road to Majdonowka, with marshy terrain on the right and broad fields to the left. The *7./Infanterie-Regiment 70* was in position there, about 1 kilometer from the bridge. With the arrival of the assault guns, friendly artillery began to take the patch of woods to the north, which was the attack objective, under effective fire. Using the cover provided by the fires of the assault guns, the friendly infantry assaulted quickly into the woods. A few pockets of resistance were taken out of commission by a few well-aimed rounds [from the guns]. The prisoners began to pile up. The attack wave was soon in the woods and combed them. Suddenly, the "B" Gun was taken under fire from the left. Before it could turn to engage the enemy itself, however, the guns of the platoon moving on the left took out the Russian infantry gun with a few rounds. The guns then swung left around the woods and fired into the swarms of riflemen and columns until nothing more was to be seen of the enemy far and wide. The attack objective had been reached. The infantry dug in. After the mission had been completed, the battery was pulled back to the bridge at Osjorschischina. In the process, *Gefreiter* Ahl was wounded by hidden Russian riflemen. In the meantime, it had almost turned to 0900 hours. The *I./Infanterie-Regiment 70* had been under heavy Russian artillery fire at Golaja ever since 0700 hours. The battalion had bogged down. The intervention of our assault guns also set the impetus there as well. Golaja was taken. The Russians put up stiff resistance. The village had to be taken house-by-house. In the process, *Oberkanonier* Kapischke and the medic, von Thümen, were wounded. The wounding of Kapischke meant that four of the five "dismount" noncommissioned officers, who have been with the battery since the beginning of the war, have been wounded. The battery was pulled back to Korolowka. It spent the night there. The Battery Commander arrived in the afternoon and assumed command of the battery again.

31 July 1941: The combat elements initially remained in Korolowka. During the afternoon, they were brought forward to just behind Ljudwinowka. At 1900 hours, they advanced with the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 70* on Majdanowka. The village was not occupied by the enemy. The enemy had already pulled back to the north. The battery spent the night [there]. The trains remained the entire day in Lawalowka.

1 August 1941: The combat elements reorganized themselves into two platoons, each with two guns (under the leadership of *Leutnant* Spielmann and *Leutnant* Ulbricht). *Leutnant* Ulbricht headed out towards Wischnjakow at 0400 hours to link up with the *7./Infanterie-Regiment 70*. This company was in position at the northeastern outskirts of Majdanowka. With the appearance of the assault guns, the company advanced east to the fork in the road (Wischnjakow — Osjorschischina), without encountering the enemy. The objective that had been given was quickly taken. Then an order arrived to continue the advance. The guns were not able to move further to the east. Marshy terrain made it impossible. As a result, the platoon advanced to the northeast with two squads of infantry, moving as far as a swell in the ground at the edge of a patch of woods. From there, the road and the Kiev — Olewsk railway line could be seen. Fire was opened at a distance of 300-400 against firing Russians. In order to get a better field of fire, the "E" Gun of *Wachtmeister* Schrödel moved past the "D" Gun. At that moment, there was a monstrous detonation and a black cloud of smoke engulfed the assault gun. It had run over a mine. The right-hand running gear was almost completely destroyed. Under the covering fire of the "D" Gun, the crew left its gun under heavy enemy fire. The last one to jump down was the driver, *Unteroffizier* Kloth. In the process, he set off another mine, which tore him apart. The detonation was so powerful that the ventilator in the "D" Gun was damaged in the process. In short order, the coolant water in the radiator climbed to 120 degrees Celsius [248 degrees Fahrenheit]. The gun had to be pulled back to Majalanowka as a result and could no longer provide covering fire for the "E" Gun. As a result of the heavy, aimed fire of the Russian artillery and mortars, our infantry could not hold [its forward line of advance] and pulled back to the initial attack objective. The platoon leader went with the infantry. Two hours later, the Battery Commander went with the 1st Platoon and a mine-clearing party up to the "E" Gun. It was impossible to recover the vehicle; it was also impossible to hold the position. The fire was too heavy. They had to pull back again.The "E" Gun was later recovered by the Russians. In the meantime, *Leutnant* Ulbricht reconnoitered a way for the attack of the 1st Platoon to the east. In the morning, the platoon had been unable to support the planned attack from Golaja to the north due to the terrain, which had been made difficult to negotiate due to the artillery fire. Around noon, the attack east of the 1st Platoon with the *2./Infanterie-Regiment 70* started from the positions of the *7./Infanterie-Regiment 70*. It proceeded forward rapidly initially as far as the estate at Wischnjakow. The attack objective was reached. The infantry dug in to defend under heavy enemy fire. The guns were taken under aimed fire. The firing increased. [The guns] were only able to prevent [the enemy from] registering by constantly changing positions. At 1815 hours, the Russians launched a counterattack with an estimated two battalions. It was observed that the Russian infantry was driven into battle by people on horseback. The attack collapsed under the fire from our guns, however. Armored Ammunition Vehicle "EF" ran over a mine as it was on its way to pick up ammunition — right behind friendly lines. The vehicle was destroyed. *Gefreiter* Czermak was killed; *Oberkanonier* Cantz was badly wounded. At approximately 1915 hours, the battery was pulled back to Majdanowka. It spent the night there.

2 August 1941: At 1000 hours, the trains departed Lawalowka to the former estate at Korolewka. At 1500 hours, the combat elements followed [the trains] there.

3 August 1941: The entire battery moved to Makarow at 0900 hours. The entire battalion then followed. It was intended to check the vehicles and maintain them. Our battery was detached from the *111. Infanterie-Division* and reported back to the battalion. The battalion was now directly allocated to the *XXXXV. Armee-Korps*.

4 August 1941: Day of rest in Makarow.

5 August 1941: Day of rest in Makarow.

6 August 1941: Day of rest in Makarow. On this day, *Gefreiter* Czermak was laid to rest. (280 meters to the right of the fork in the road at the northeastern outskirts of Golaja. His right-hand neighbor is *Gefreiter* Wegary of the *3./Infanterie-Regiment 70*.)

7 August 1941: Battery in Makarow.

8 August 1941: The battery departed at 0845 hours. It proceeded via Passawka, the main supply route, Rosylowo, Mahysihn, Malaja Jasnorka and Shernowka to Plessezkoje. [General] Assault Badges were awarded.

9 August 1941: Battery at Plessezkoje.

10 August 1941: Departure at 0545 hours through Skitok, Glewacha and Wassilkow as far as Malaja Oljshanka.

11 August 1941: Day of rest in Malaja Oljshanka.

12 August 1941: Day of rest in Malaja Oljshanka.

13 August 1941: The battalion has been attached to the *9. Infanterie-Division*. The combat elements moved to the new assembly area at Schandawa (via Bucty and Potok). The planned attack was postponed, because the bridges were defective.

14 August 1941: The combat elements prepared for operations. *Stukas* attacked the bridge over the Dnjepr at Kanew. The trains continued to remain in Malaja Oljshanka.

15 August 1941: The battery attacked in the direction of Kostjanez at 1430 hours. The vehicle of the Battery Commander ran over a mine in the process. It was immobilized, but nothing happened to the occupants. The vehicle remained the entire day about 200-300 meters away from the Russians, without any type of infantry cover. The Russians did not dare to try to take the gun, however.

16 August 1941: Attack on Kanew at 0800 hours. The battery was in Kanew at 1300 hours. *Oberkanonier* Weller was wounded by shrapnel from a bomb. The trains remained in Ssinjawka.

17 August 1941: The battalion was detached from the *9. Infanterie-Division*. The combat elements and the trains went to Dratschi.

18 August 1941: Battery in Dratschi. The "C" Gun (*Unteroffizier* Wirkner), which had become disabled on 28 June 1941 outside of Sitno by an artillery round and which was on its way back to the battery, ran over a forgotten mine far behind the front. *Unteroffizier* Wirkner was wounded.

19 August 1941: Battery in Dratschi.

20 August 1941: Battery in Dratschi.

21 August 1941: The battalion has been attached to the *294. Infanterie-Division*. The battery departed Dratschi at 0900 hours and arrived at Mirowka at 1415 hours.

22 August 1941: The combat elements of the battalion have been consolidated into a single battery under *Oberleutnant* Brinke. Departed to Werenja (via Kargalyk and Nowosselke). The trains followed to Mirowka.

23 August 1941: Attack at 0600 hours against the enemy bridgehead at Tripolje on the right bank of the Dnjepr. Very heavy artillery preparation. Stronger than any that have preceded it. When the attack then started, it turned out that there were no longer any enemy forces in the bridgehead. The battery took a brief break in Tripolje on the right bank of the Dnjepr. The enemy fire artillery for a short while on Tripolje. The consolidated battery had two soldiers wounded, who, it should be mentioned, are not from our unit. The observation vehicle ran over a mine; *Oberkanonier* Schneider was slightly wounded in the incident. During the afternoon, the battery moved back through Kagarlyk to Mirowka.

24 August 1941: Battery to Kirowo.

25 August 1941: Battery in Kirowo. The battalion has been transferred from the *6. Armee* to the *17. Armee*. The field army attached the battalion to the *XI. Armee-Korps*.

26 August 1941: March [route] of the battery: Kirowo — Schpendowka — Winzetowka — Bogoslaw — Medwin — Nisjanka — Swenigorodka.

27 August 1941: March [route:] Swenigorodka — Schpola — Slatopol — Schpowko — Fedawar.

28 August 1941: March [route:] Fedawar — Horbioka.

29 August 1941: March [route:] Horbioka — Mironowka (about 5-6 kilometers away from Horbioka).

30 August 1941: Day of rest in Mironowka.

31 August 1941: Day of rest in Mironowka.

1 September 1941: Day of rest in Mironowka.

2 September 1941: The battery initially moved to Pawlysch and then waited there for orders to cross the Dnjepr. The combat elements then crossed the [river]. The trains remained in Pawlysch. The crossing of the river took place by means of ferries. It went without a hitch and without enemy interference. The battery took up quarters. It was said that the enemy was 2 kilometers away.

3 September 1941: The battery moved from Frunse to Potoki. The trains remained at the old location. In the morning, the Battery Commander accompanied the attack of a company in an armored ammunition carrier as far as the dead arm of the Dnjepr at Potoki (South). There was a lot of firing, but there was no enemy found on this side of the arm. Individual machine-gun nests and tree snipers were well established in the thick woods on the far side of the Dnjepr's arm. The infantry took a few casualties. The Battery Commander's vehicle was fired at a lot, but it had luck and made it through in one piece.

4 September 1941: The battery remained at Potoki. The trains joined it. There was an air attack as the trains crossed the Dnjepr. Bombs fell in the river close to a ferry. There was no damage, however. Lively Russian air activity. Constant attacks on the Dnjepr crossing point are certainly disruptive, but they are also seemingly without any success. Only 2-3 German fighters protect the sector. Of course, the Russians usually use the opportunity to attack when the German fighters are at the other end of the sector. If our fighters do encounter the Russians, however, then [they] are usually superior and the Russians have to leave the area. Russian air attacks also take place at night.

5 September 1941: The combat elements moved to Lawrikowka. They have been attached to the *101. Infanterie-Division*. Together with the infantry, two important villages were taken. The operation was a major success. The regimental commander and the battalion commander were enthusiastic about the effectiveness of our guns. The friendly infantry casualties were minimal. The Russians carried out lively fire with mortars. The combat elements moved back to Lawrikowka after the fighting.

6 September 1945: Day of rest in Lawrikowka. The trains were brought forward. Once again, lively Russian aerial activity. In the afternoon, six German fighters attacked the Russian bombers in a concentric fashion. Four of the bombers were shot down! After that occurred, the skies looked as if they had been swept clean. Late in the afternoon, the battery moved to Sichody, in order to cross the Pssiol at Potoki the next day and join in the fighting at Krementschug. The Russians have badly damaged the railway bridge at Potoki by demolitions; they even did a bang-up job blowing up the pedestrian bridge. The railway bridge is being restored now. Engineers and Labor Service are working together. The back-up crews of our batteries are also helping. The Russian artillery is trying feverishly to disrupt the work and destroy the bridge. When the Battery Chief went forward to take a look at the repair work, he was slightly wounded in the head by artillery shrapnel. He remained in command of the battery, however.

7 September 1941: The battery has been attached to *Infanterie-Regiment 419* of the *125. Infanterie-Division*. The battery proceeded across the railway bridge at Potoki and, together with the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 419*, on to Romanki, the "Village of Poplars". There was heavy Russian mortar fire there. *Kanonier* Michael was wounded by it. The battery supported the advance of the reconnaissance battalion of the *111. Infanterie-Division* in the direction of Omjelnik. Several Russian guns were destroyed. An antitank round went through the vehicle of the Battery Commander and wounded *Gefreiter* Heynemann, *Gefreiter* Schlemminger and *Oberkanonier* Maslowski. Nothing happened to the Commander. The vehicle caught on fire; the Battery Commander picked up the "Minimax" fire extinguisher and, the picture of calm as he read the instructions, extinguished the fire. Late in the afternoon, the battery cleaned up the positions in front of the *III./Infanterie-Regiment 419*. The Russians have been beaten back as far as Bordjugi and Litwinenki. The trains moved forward to Lichwody.

8 September 1941: Attack with the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 419*. Wanschuli was taken practically without a fight. The attack objective had already been taken by 0900 hours. The battery then went to Togari. It found the village to be clear of the enemy. Two Russian batteries positioned on the front slope [of some high ground] were chased behind the hill by the "B" Gun. The Russians then placed heavy fire on our guns. The battery pulled back to the courtyard of a collective farm. The Russians apparently saw that, since they then placed heavy fire on the collective farm. *Kanonier* Lipp was killed; *Unteroffizier* Flintrop and *Unteroffizier* Kläden were wounded. *Kanonier* Lipp was laid to rest at the collective farm. The battery moved to Wanschuli and spent the night there. The trains were brought forward to Romanki.

9 September 1941: Together with the *I./Infanterie-Regiment 419*, the battery moved out to attack Litwinjenki at 1520 hours. The village was taken quickly. Although the objective of the day was taken, the advance continued. The next village — Bordjugi — was also taken. Outside of Bordjugi, a heavy Russian machine gun hit the optics port for the gunner on the "B" Gun and shot the all-round sight to pieces. The gun had to be pulled back. The "A" Gun also was hit in this same area. The disc for the spring-loaded top part hit the gunner, *Obergefreiter* König, in the head and put him out of action for a while. The gun commander had to replace him. When he did, he was also eliminated the enemy machine gun. The round, which ricocheted on the front slope, slightly wounded the driver, *Obergefreiter* Scheeler. After the fighting, the battery moved back to Wanschuli.

10 September 1941: Day of rest for the combat elements in Wanschuli. The trains remained in Romanki.

11 September 1941: Due to the bad weather, a planned operation against Omjelnik was cancelled. The combat elements and the trains remained at their old locations.

12 September 1941: Omjelnik was taken after heavy fighting. *Leutnant* Preußer and Medic von Thümen were wounded in the fighting. The battery remained in Omjelnik. The trains in Romanki. The mission for the battery in this sector has been accomplished. The bridgehead at Krementschug has been established and sufficiently expanded. *Panzergruppe Kleist* is increasingly moving into the area, so as to advance north and link up with *Panzergruppe Guderian,* which is advancing south from Romny. The intent is to encircle and destroy the army of Budjenny, which is in the Kiev area.

13 September 1941: The battery has been attached to the *100. Infanterie-Division*. It assembled at Romanki at 1100 hours and then departed from there at 1300 hours. March route: Romanki — bridge at Potoki — Sseleskij. Arrival at Sseleskij at 1730 hours. The battery bivouacked in the open.

14 September 1941: The battery has been attached to *Infanterie-Regiment 54*. Start of the attack: 1400 hours. Attack objective is the rail line east of the train station for Gannowka. Andrejki and Duduki were taken and the advance moved forward a total of 12 kilometers. It has been the most successful day of the battery so far. Just the 1st Platoon alone captured 16 guns; the 2nd Platoon destroyed two Russian batteries and captured numerous guns. One of them was a 18-centimeter cannon. As a result, the artillery [capabilities] of the enemy in this sector have been shattered. There is only light Russian artillery fire all the way up to Poltawa.

15 September 1941: The division has broken through the enemy positions and reached the railway east

of Gannowka. The *100. Infanterie-Division* has formed an advance guard. It goes without saying that our battery is part of it. The Koheljaki was reached. Some resistance has flared up in a few villages, but it is immediately broken. There's no stopping the advance. The trains were brought forward to Andrejki. *Unteroffizier* Adam was wounded this day by a fanatical Russian tanker. The Russian had remained in an immobilized tank far behind the front. When *Unteroffizier* Adam wanted to see the interior of the tank and opened its hatch, he was wounded by the Russian. A hand grenade then took care of the fanatical Russian.

16 September 1941: The advance guard moved irresistibly forward. It proceeded through Merkowo to Leman. The Russians have been completely surprised by the rapid advance. The advance guard rolled deeply into the truck columns of the enemy that were pulling back. The 1st Platoon captured 23 trucks; the 2nd Platoon 16. The 1st Platoon spent the night in Leman. The 2nd Platoon moved as far as Andrejki during the afternoon. The trains were brought forward from Andrejki to Markowo at 0800 hours. Arrival in Markowo at 1200 hours.

17 September 1941: The advance guard is advancing without a rest. The 2nd Platoon is advancing with the advance guard. Our Battery Commander is also with the platoon. The "C" Gun ran over a mine at the start of the move. The damage, however, was not too bad, and the gun could continue to move. A bridgehead was established at Andrewka. The 2nd Platoon went as far as Wassjki. Numerous Russian tanks appeared. There are also relatively many heavy types among them. The 2nd Platoon destroyed two tanks on the way from Andrewka to Wassjki. The positions at Andrewka were engaged by eight Russian tanks, but the enemy was not successful. The 1st Platoon advanced with *Marschgruppe Eckstein*. March route: Leman — Ploskoje, and then to Andrewka. Due to a damaged bridge at Ploskoje, the platoon marched north through Nowo-Demidowka. The march serial was engaged by a few Russian tanks there. A medium tank was rendered combat ineffective in the engagement. While continuing to march in the direction of Andrewka, the platoon engaged another eight Russian tanks at long range. The platoon spent the night in Andrewka. The trains were brought forward to Ploskoje. It should be noted that the situation there was very uncertain.

18 September 1941: All of the combat elements were directed to Wassjki. Heavy fighting with Russian tanks. *Flak* and assault guns were brought up. An 8.8-centimeter *Flak* was blown apart. Our guns tipped the scales here as well. They destroyed eight Russian tanks, including a heavy one. The combat elements spent the night in Rybzy. The trains in Ploskoje.

19 September 1941: Battery in Rybzy. Trains to Masurowka.

20 September 1941: Together with *Aufklärungs-Abteilung 101*, two bicycle companies and a heavy artillery battalion, the battery received orders to clear the village of Reschlowka. There was heavy fighting in the village proper against superior numbers of Russian tanks. The "C" Gun was hit and had to go back. *Unteroffizier* Hacker was wounded when the vehicle was hit. The Battery Commander went forward with *Leutnant* Spielmann and *Unteroffizier* Thiel to look for hidden Russian tanks and mortars. When they were observing the far side of a small river, a Russian tank fired. The round smashed the left leg of the Battery Commander. A little while later, an enemy tank fired on the "A" Gun and badly wounded *Obergefreiter* König; *Leutnant* Konnak and *Oberkanonier* Golinski were slightly wounded. The village could be secured, however, without additional problems and casualties. In the evening, the battery went to Demidowka. *Leutnant* Spielmann assumed acting command of the battery; *Leutnant* Fellbier of the 1st Platoon.

21 September 1941: The combat elements and the trains went to Poltawa. The combat elements immediately continued on to Dullianek. The battery has been attached to the *100. Infanterie-Division* again.

22 September 1941: The battery has been attached to the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 54*. Mission: Screen the left flank of the division. Wakolonje was found to be clear of the enemy. Then an advance to Ternowschtschina. Only small skirmishes.

23 September 1941: Advance to Krutoi Bereg. Battery attached to the *57. Infanterie-Division*. The trans were moved forward to Krjukowa at 1400 hours.

24 September 1941: Combat elements and trains to Darskajejewka.

25 September 1941: Battery in Darskajejewka. The 1st Platoon around Magdenko. The command vehicle was hit: *Leutnant* Fellbier, *Gefreiter* Traub and *Gefreiter* Schlemminger dead; *Gefreiter* Jung and *Oberkanonier* Hütter wounded. The "C" Gun became disabled; two rounds stuck in the final drives. No one from the crew was lost. The combat elements spent the night in Ladyshen. The trains at the old location.

27 September 1941: The battery has been attached to the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 217* and attacked with it. The enemy was a formation of Caucasian forces! Many prisoners were taken. The battery spent the night in the collective farm at Ladyshen. The trains moved to Magdenka.

28 September 1941: Battery in the collective farm at Ladyshen. Attack in the direction of Nobowka at noon. The attack was stopped because of heavy Russian fire. There was also heavy Russian artillery fire on the collective farm at Ladyshen. As a result, the battery went to Trobowka.

29 September 1941: Day of rest for the combat elements in Trobowka. In the evening, march to Magdenka, where they linked up with the trains.

30 September 1941: Battery to Poltawa.

1-10 October 1941: Battery in Poltawa. Maintenance of the vehicles.

11 October 1941: The combat elements have been attached to the *57. Infanterie-Division* again. Departure in the morning from Poltawa to Belobrowy at 0700 hours. *Oberleutnant* Liedtke is in command. *Leutnant* Preußer leads the 1st Platoon; *Leutnant* Seitz the 2nd; and *Leutnant* Spielmann is the battery officer. After a march of more than 100 kilometers, the combat elements reached Nastonkowka, after having left the trains in Filenkow. In some places, there was heavy snowfall. Arrival after it had turned dark. The ground has softened up and is already causing considerable difficulties for the wheeled vehicles. The battery is supposed to be attached to *Aufklärungs-Abteilung 157*. The reconnaissance battalion has taken over a defensive sector of the *57. Infanterie-Division* and is being employed as infantry.

12 October 1941: New attachment: *Infanterie-Regiment 199*. During the afternoon, the 2nd Platoon, with both the Platoon Leader and the Battery Commander, screened the withdrawal of the combat-outpost line to the main line of resistance. Only limited successes. In the evening, everyone returned to their quarters.

13 October 1941: No operations. Snow and rain. The weather is continuously getting worse.

14 October 1941: Another change. The battery is once again attached to *Aufklärungs-Abteilung 157*. The combat elements moved to Kustaraika at first light. Once again, no operations. Due to the lack of quarters, the battery pulled back to Nastonkowka at the onset of darkness.

15 October 1941: *Leutnant* Spielmann went to the trains to orchestrate supplies, which are having a lot of problems due to the extraordinarily bad weather conditions. The combat elements moved back to Kustaraika at first light. At 1200 hours, the command-and-control relationship changed: Now with *Infanterie-Regiment 179*. Two hours prior to that, however, the 2nd Platoon had already been ordered to the sector of *Infanterie-Regiment 199* to defend against an attack. The 1st Platoon was moved to the bicycle troop of *Aufklärungs-Abteilung 157* where, with its two guns, it forced two T 34's to turn back. In the evening, both of the platoons returned to Kustaraika.

16 October 1941: In order to be immediately available in the event of enemy attacks, the 1st Platoon moved out at first light to its old positions. The 2nd Platoon relieved it in the afternoon. At the onset of darkness, all of the combat elements were back in their quarters. It has been fairly quiet, at least from an infantry and artillery perspective. There have been individual air attacks on the villages.The weather has improved. The unimproved roads have begun to dry out.

17 October 1941: Because the enemy has pulled back — as was already fairly easy to see yesterday — the division formed an advance guard for the advance, which was to follow immediately. This time, the advance guard consisted of *Aufklärungs-Abteilung 117* and our battery. It started at first light. Just after moving out, the "A" Gun collapsed into a cellar. Despite hard efforts, it could not be recovered.The battery soon had to find another route than the planned one due to the poor bridge conditions. In the process, another two guns got stuck in the marshy terrain. It was only after backbreaking work with the help of the last two operational guns and the T 34 (captured tank), which had arrived in the meantime, that both of them could be recovered. In the meantime, the lead elements of the advance guard had encountered resistance. Shortly before noon, the battery had made its way forward. It immediately helped in clearing the village of Margino, which was almost exclusively held by a few mortar sections. *Leutnant* Spielmann suffered his fifth wound, which forced him to spend time in the trains for the time being. The advance continued. The platoons advanced in front of the bicycle troop. A collective farm was cleared out after a few rounds. There were numerous prisoners. Shortly before it turned dark, the advance guard moved through a field position. Once again, a number of prisoners were taken, who did not offer the slightest bit of resistance. The advance guard turned off into a small village in the evening in order to spend the night there. Soviet supplies of *Panje* carts showed up at the same time and were captured; they immediately were incorporated into the advance guard. While searching for quarters, Russian soldiers eating their evening meal first had to be taken prisoner in order to get any kind of room. They were arriving in swarms and turned in their weapons, even though they probably could have fled under the cover of darkness.

18 October 1941: On this morning as well, the battery had to search out another route than the one the rest of the advance guard was taking, since a narrow and weak weir prevented passage. In the course of carrying out a small screening mission, one gun was not able to climb a steep slope. When the "A" Gun, which had positioned itself in front for towing, attempted to apply power, its transmission froze in reverse. The gun had to remain here — in Kirassirsky. Shortly after linking up with the advance guard, the objective of the day was reached. It had become the afternoon by then. When one of the guns reconnoitered to the left, a small Russian [horse] cavalry unit appeared. It was quickly defeated and scattered. The same fate befell a squad of Russian infantry coming the same way. The route of advance was paralleled by a creek that was surrounded by a few villages. A T 34 was moving around on the far side. To the surprise of all, it took flight in front of a 3.7-centimeter antitank gun. The battery spent the night along with the rest of the advance guard in Nowy-Metschik, along the aforementioned creek. For dinner there were a few fat geese!

19 October 1941: Since it appeared that no more advance had been planned, the 2nd Platoon was employed to screen. At noon, it moved a few kilometers forward, since another hill was supposed to be taken. The 1st Platoon also moved forward. In the afternoon, it turned out that the neighboring division had already advanced further. It had already gone past the tank ditch. It was determined that the terrain had not been mined. The advance guard then occupied a small village. The 1st Platoon screened to the right from behind the tank ditch. It chased away an enemy mortar, but it was also heavily engaged towards evening. While the main body of the advance guard (with the 2nd Platoon) marched along the creek, the [bicycle] troop advanced to the right with the 1st Platoon. It was not until darkness had fallen that everyone assembled in Stary-Mertschik.

20 October 1941: It rained the entire night; accordingly, the unimproved roadways were bottomless. Despite this, we continued. Late in the morning, the Walki — Kharkov road was reached. A larger village was reached at the same time as the neighboring division. Numerous *Panje* carts were captured with rations and ammunition. We continued on without a break. Just outside of the village, more *Panje* columns were caught, they had automatic flamethrowers [on the carts], which now will never be employed. It continuously alternated between moving and firing. It was frequently difficult to determine where the barrel should be pointed first. The vehicles were rearmed one more time. Fuel was provided by a captured Russian fuel truck. Other vehicles that approached us were quickly halted or — as was often the case because they turned or even attempted to race past — were rammed or shot to pieces. Once in a while, there was an antitank gun or artillery piece that flanked us, but the advance continued without let up. A locomotive steaming towards us was taken under fire, whereupon it immediately changed its direction of march 180 degrees. The Udy River was reached without serious incident; it is directly behind the village of Luki. An *Oberfeldwebel* from the bicycle troop quickly destroyed the preparations the Russians had made for demolishing the bridge. It was not until the bridgehead had been established that everyone came to the realization that the large city of Kharkov was there before our amazed eyes. It was only about 2-3 kilometers to the urban portion of the city. The guns got some more work. A T 34 raced into the city with wild abandon. A tractor with two fully loaded trailers worked its way towards the protection of the buildings. To the left, there was fire from a battery that had set up in the open. Not only was it put out of commission, but its ammunition went sky high as well. And then our battery had no more ammunition! Fully laden trucks, which were parked to the

left of us as if on a range, had to be left undisturbed. Moving there was out of the question, since there was a river in between. Our advance guard had advanced further than any other force of the entire corps. Because of this situation, an all-round defensive posture was established. A large guard force was established for the night. The assault guns were dispersed to provide security. Barely anybody got any shut-eye tonight. *Leutnant* Konnak, who is filling in for *Leutnant* Spielmann as the Battery Officer, went with an officer from the reconnaissance battalion back to the division in order to bring up reinforcements so that we do not lose this important area again. Lively vehicular traffic in the form of prime movers and tanks, that are pulling back into the city, could be heard the entire night.

22 October 1941: By first light a tank battalion had shown up; in the course of the morning, the infantry also arrived. Towards noon, the artillery was in position. Despite this, the advance did not continue. The battery bivouacked. It turned out that we were not able to get any fuel or ammunition from our trains, which were still in Margino. The long stretches of muck could not be overcome by our wheeled vehicles. *Leutnant* Konnak went to the rear to solve this difficult problem. *Leutnant* Preußer was also sent to the trains, since there was no news from *Leutnant* Konnak.

23 October 1941: The trains got through the bad stretch and reached an improved road. Fuel and ammunition were brought forward. The torsion bar springs also arrived for the disabled "E" Gun. The two remaining guns moved out to attack at 1200 hours. The battery has been attached to the *I./Infanterie-Regiment 199*. It was initially moved forward into a factory building. It was impossible to advance further, since the bridge had been blown up. In the meantime, the 3rd Battery has also come up. Both of the batteries are waiting for an engineer bridge, which is being feverishly erected. We used the opportunity to refuel. Every gun received four [20-liter] canisters and every command and control vehicle two. That used up all of the fuel that the medic vehicle had brought with it. The engineer bridge was completed at approximately 1630 hours. The 3rd Battery — five guns and a captured T 34 — rolled past us proudly, only to get stuck behind the bridge. Our battery with its two remaining guns then rolled past it. [The battery] can lay claim to be the first ones in Kharkov! The infantry continued its attack after the guns appeared. *Unteroffizier* Dorsch took engineers along with him to protect against mines. After 20 meters, he asked them to dismount. In that instant, the gun fired. A short firefight and two Russian 10-centimeter guns, which had pulled up in the open on the road, could be reported as having been destroyed. In the further course of the fighting, *Unteroffizier* Dorsch was able to knock out a light tank and a medium tank as well! *Unteroffizier* Wedler also eliminated a light tank and, as it started to get dark, set an armored car alight! Two hours after darkness fell, the battery was pulled back; it took up positions for the night.

24 October 1941: Shortly after the start of the attack, the "E" Gun, which had been repaired in the meantime, showed up. The battery then rolled along the broad streets of the inner city with three command and control vehicles and three assault guns. Whenever there is a round fired, the window panes fall out on all the stories and onto the heads of the infantrymen. The steel helmet has justified its existence once again. At a bridge in the middle of the city, there was a short duel between an assault gun and a 7.62-centimeter [antitank gun], which ended in our victory. A few small armored cars were set alight with the first round. A small enemy bridge-demolition team was turned back. Men from the weekly newsreels and reporters for the radio swarmed around the lead combat elements. As a result, the battery appeared for the first time in several sequentially running weekly newsreels. The battery then changed [command and control relationships] from the *I./Infanterie-Regiment 199* to the *III./Infanterie-Regiment 199*, whose advance only encountered sporadic resistance. Finally, the battery went to the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 199*, where absolutely nothing was going on. When it turned dark, the battery pulled back into the vicinity of a stadium and spent the night in suitable quarters.

25 October 1941: The mission today was to clear the actual center of the city. However, it was found to be completely clear already. This meant the third-largest city in the Soviet Union was in our hands. The last few days of operations for the battery represented the high point [of its operations so far]. Despite all this, a look at the city is all the more disappointing. Behind all of the magnificent facades are nothing but trash and collapse. Only the international hotels, which are all burnt out or have been laid to waste, however, must have had something approaching culture in them. In the afternoon, the battery found excellent quarters — excellent for Russian standards, at any rate — in a large apartment building. The trains, which had already advanced as far as the stadium, remained there.

26 October - 3 November 1941: Days of rest for the battery. The vehicles were maintained. Both of the guns that remained behind — "A" Gun and "B" Gun — have been classified as total losses, since there was

no way to get them up front. *Hauptmann* Steinwachs introduced himself to the battery as the new battalion commander.

4 November 1941: Departure early in the morning with the objective of Melitopol. The entire battalion is supposed to reach the area of operations of the *11. Armee*. After the first few kilometers, the battery was greeted by such a bad road that only 50 kilometers could be covered by evening. The transition to rest was made at Nowoja Wodolaga. Two trucks and the bus, which was transformed into a "luxury-class" orderly room in Kharkov, have broken down and had to remain behind.

5 November 1941: Krasnograd, the first major march objective, was not reached on this day, either. Darkness surprised the battery at Starowlerowka, 20 kilometers away. Most of the movement was done in "convoy": 4 or 5 trucks behind a gun. Otherwise there was no chance of them moving forward. These days of marching have placed enormous demands, mostly on the equipment, but also on the personnel, since the weather is cold and rainy.

6 November 1941: Krasnograd was reached early in the afternoon. The battery took up quarters in a village just outside the city, since the fuel situation did not allow any further movement. A few kilometers before that a patch of muck had to be crossed that put everything else encountered so far to shame. One 18-ton prime mover sank past its mud guards. It later froze solidly in place and had to be left there.

7 November 1941: The day was spent trying to get fuel, which the battery finally acquired in the course of the night at the supply point for the *17. Armee*. The rain continues.

8 November 1941: Today the battery surpassed all of it previously achieved daily march statistics and increased it to 70 kilometers; it went as far as a village just outside of Nowomoskowsk.

9 November 1941: After four kilometers, an improved-surface road was finally reached. The march went quickly to Nowomoskowsk and across the "Kleist Bridge" over the Dnjepr and into Dnjepropetrowsk, where a short midday rest was taken. The city made a very good impressions; even the streetcars were running again. In the afternoon, half the distance to Saporoshje was covered — once again, a fabulous road — and the battery spent the night just off the march route in a collective farm.

10 November 1941: By morning, the Dnjepr ferry at Saporoshje was reached. The last vehicles did not cross until after the onset of darkness. The night was spent in a suburb in strikingly ornamented houses.

11 November 1941: After moving through the city, the good road accompanied us for another 50 kilometers. Then there was a delay, because a bridge had been blown up. The detour took an entire day to complete. Quarters for the night were taken in Jantschekrak.

12 November 1941: The terrain soon assumed the characteristics of the steppe. It offered the battery the advantage of being firm — even though not asphalted — and with barely an incline. Flatlands far and wide, with only a village every 25 kilometers. After a speedy march, Melitopol was reached pretty much on time. Quarters were established in a suburb and then contact was established with the local area military commander. The order to continue on to Simferopol, the capitol of the Crimea, was already awaiting us. So we were going there after all! The news was truly well received, since only good things had been heard about the terrain and the climate on the peninsula. The only fly in the ointment was the requirement to cover another 350 kilometers.

13 November 1941: The battery arranged for a day of rest, since the maintenance section, which had remained behind in Krasnograd, had not yet caught up. Hasty maintenance of the vehicles and, more importantly, personal hygiene, which has really become necessary!

14 November 1941: A big surprise in the morning: It was -20 Celsius [-4 Fahrenheit]! Although the maintenance section arrived last night, there were now two motor blocks torn apart, frozen brake drums etc. so that it took hours before the battery was able to move out. Although that did not take place until the afternoon, it was able to advance 70 kilometers on the icy, frozen road. The battery spent the night at Petrowka, half way to Perekop.

15 November 1941: As the result of the bad, bumpy road, we only got as far as Nowo-Kontantinowka on this day. It is the last village before Perekop. If you discount the enormous cold, marching has become easier, since all of the vehicles can roll under their own power again.

16 November 1941: The great disappointment set in! The Crimea has been reached and, with it, Perekop, the city of the narrows, where many traces of the fighting that took place here have remained. Perekop: A village of the ugliest type! The steppes here are even more desolate than the Nogaisch Steppes had been for us. On top of that was the bitter cold! The march objective of the day is Dshankoj, which was marked on the map as a village and turned out to be a small city — pleasant surprise!

17 November 1941: The road is becoming better: Gravel, in parts even asphalt! The Jaila Mountain Range soon showed itself in the background. Once behind Sarabus, where the *11. Armee* has its headquarters, there was even a thaw. The sun has been shining; the ground has become rolling. Early in the afternoon, the outskirts of the city of Simferopol were reached. We were finally at our objective! The battery took up quarters in Ukrainka, a small village on the outskirts of the city. It will now be able to enjoy a few days of rest, since the march has been exceptionally strenuous. In addition, the vehicles that have been left behind have to be collected.

18 November to 12 December 1941: The planned attack on Sevastopol keeps on getting pushed back. The actual work to bring the vehicles back up to standard cannot be started, since the maintenance section is still in the vicinity of Krasnograd — Dnjepropetrowsk. For Russian standards, the battery is in very decent quarters. Lots of space. The weather is generally very warm; it's only when the moon changes that a period of frost will set in along with snowfall. Thte guns have been painted white. During this period of rest, the battery has had opportunity to occasionally go into the city and visit the "frontline movie theater". You can also do to the dentist and also do some other things that contribute to physical and mental recovery. For instance, the battery library, maintained by *Unteroffizier* Raydt, has been in demand again.

13 December 1941: The orders for the Sevastopol operation finally arrived. The battery is going to a Rumanian "fast regiment", which has been attached to the corps. *Gruppe Boddien*, which consists of a reconnaissance battalion and the *Sturmbataillon Brandenburg*, has been attached to the regiment. Our battery will be going to *Gruppe Boddien*. The Battery Commander, *Leutnant* Spielmann, and *Leutnant* Seitz had already established contact locally several weeks ago and had been briefed on the intent of the attack. The battery moved out from its quarters in the afternoon at the onset of darkness, since a night march had been ordered. After moving a distance of 60 kilometers, the battery reached the village of Orta-Kisek, in the northern sector of the encirclement. *Leutnant* Spielmann had already established quarters. The Platoon Leader of the 1st Platoon (simultaneously a gun commander) is *Leutnant* Preußer; Platoon Leader of the 2nd Platoon (simultaneously a gun commander) is *Leutnant* Seitz. The two remain guns are commanded by *Oberwachtmeister* Schrödel and *Wachtmeister* Thiel.

14 December 1941: The attack has been postponed for yet another day — now on 16 December 1941. In the afternoon, the officers went to a conference at the command post of the reconnaissance battalion.

15 December 1941: Another postponement of the attack for a day. Intense Russian low-level air attacks in the afternoon.

16 December 1941: During the morning, ammunition and fuel were brought forward to the assembly area. The guns had to be washed again, since the upcoming attack is falling in a warm period. In the afternoon, the guns also moved into the assembly area. It is so warm that you can sleep outside without giving it a second thought.

17 December 1941: Start of the attack. As had been arranged, the 1st Platoon moved out to the right of a line of telegraph poles stretching to the south; the 2nd Platoon was to its left. This happened when the sound of fighting could be heard. When the [enemy's] forward-most lines were reached at first light, it was discovered that the enemy had already evacuated them. An engagement started about 20 meters in front of the main line of resistance, whereby the infantry bogged down completely and could not fire. The only thing that was effective were the assault guns and the Army *Flak*. They were barely able to do anything against the well-constructed Russian fortifications, however. The enemy artillery started to participate in the fighting with an ever-increasing presence. The gun of *Wachtmeister* Thiel was soon in flames, but the crew was able to save itself. The next gun to receive a direct hit was that of *Leutnant* Seitz, whose driver, *Gefreiter* Grohal, was killed. The crew dismounted. Once outside, *Leutnant* Seitz and *Unteroffizier* Dorsch were wounded seriously enough by shrapnel to be evacuated to the hospital. The brave crew of the ammunition vehicle, *Gefreiter* Magg and *Gefreiter* Röder, went above the call of duty later on when evacuating the wounded, since they did all of it under extremely heavy enemy fire. The streak of bad luck continued. Not too far from the Battery Commander's vehicle, the gun of *Leutnant* Preußer ran over a mine, so that it became immobilized. After half an hour, the enemy artillery had registered so well that the crew had to dismount. Shortly thereafter, a direct hit destroyed the gun. *Leutnant* Preußer was slightly wounded, but he was able to move back in the command and control vehicle with the rest of his crew. The only remaining gun — that of *Oberwachtmeister* Schrödel — came back, badly damaged in its running gear. That was the end! In a few hours, the proud 1st Battery had been battered beyond recognition after a heroic struggle…

18 December 1941: The remaining vehicles were pulled back to Ukrainka. The remaining batteries of the battalion remained in action until the attack was called off. This time, they were luckier than we had been!

22 December 1941: The battery detached the "E" Gun of *Unteroffizier* Wedler, which had been repaired, to the 3rd Battery for its operations around Sevastopol. *Unteroffizier* Raydt was promoted to *Wachtmeister*. During the evening, the battery had its Christmas party in a spacious hall in the city of Simferopol. There was *Stollen*, chocolate, cigars, cigarettes, fruit drops and bonbons — considering the circumstances, quite an abundance! On top of that, there was true champagne, *Schnaps* and Crimean wine! The Battery Commander pointed to the meaning of the celebration in his introductory remarks and wished everyone a nice evening. He then presented *Gefreiter* Schumacher and *Gefreiter* Ziegenbalg the War Service Cross, 2nd Class, with Swords. There wasn't a firm program set up for the evening, but everyone got his money's worth. It turned into a terrific, heady celebration, in which some pulled out all the stops. The last [revelers] landed up in Ukrainka at 0200 hours…

24 December 1941: *Leutnant* Seitz returned from the hospital.

25 and 26 December 1941: The battery experienced a quiet, meditative Christmas. The personnel celebrated among small circles of friends. Most of the quarters had a Christmas tree. There was no training schedule, of course.

27 December 1941: The battery detached the command and control vehicle (*Z3*), along with its crew, to *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 190* for the operations against Sevastopol.

29 December 1941: *Unteroffizier* Berner and *Oberkanonier* Singelmann, who had remained behind during the march from Kharkov, arrived back to the battery with the motorcycle (*K2*).

31 December 1941: The battery greeted the New year very quietly in Ukrainka.

1 January 1942: The battery assembled during the afternoon of New Year's Day, almost as if alerted. It was announced that the combat elements and the combat trains would move to Dshankoj the next day. Eight new guns were to be received there. Following that, the battery was going to go to the Kerch Peninsula. The Soviets lad landed forces in Kerch and Feodosia! The *Z3* command and control vehicle and the crew of the "E" Gun returned to the battery. The "E" Gun itself was transferred to the 3rd Battery.

2 January 1942: Departure to Dshankoj (via Sarabus) at 0700 hours in the morning. March distance: 80 kilometers. Arrival in Dshankoj around noon. Along with the battery, trucks and assault-gun drivers from

the 2nd and 3rd Battery, as well as *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 190*, arrived. There were not sufficient vehicles and personnel in our own unit for the employment of eight assault guns. The battery occupied quarters in houses, since the guns have not yet arrived. During the afternoon, the Battery Commander was able to present a few awards for the operations outside of Sevastopol: Iron Cross, 1st Class, to *Leutnant* Seitz and *Unteroffizier* Dorsch (in the hospital) Iron Cross, 2nd Class, to *Gefreiter* Röder, *Gefreiter* Sudbrink, *Gefreiter* Prezler, *Gefreiter* K. Schmidt, *Gefreiter* Golinski, *Gefreiter* Jaskiela, *Gefreiter* Schleicher (in Simferopol) and *Gefreiter* Reetz (in the hospital).

3 January to 2 February 1942: Days of rest for the battery in Dshankoj. We waited for the guns in vain. Two alerts were received, but there was always a disappointment. The first time, 8 antitank guns arrived on the train; the second time, a tank battalion.

11 January 1942: The Battery Commander awarded the Iron Cross, 1st Class, to *Wachtmeister* Thiel.

14 January 1942: *Hauptwachtmeister* Wohlmuth was transferred to the headquarters Battery. *Wachtmeister* Thiel replaced him in the capacity as the Battery First Sergeant.

15 January 1942: The battery has been integrated into the defensive positions for the city of Dshankoj. A special alert-notification plan was announced and guards were posted at the outskirts of the city. These have been disquieting times. The Soviets have been attempting everything to get the Crimea into their hands!

20 January 1942: *Unteroffizier* Beise and *Unteroffizier* Loeck were detailed to attend the weapons school and sent to Schweinfurt for this purpose. They were immediately released.

22 January 1942: By virtue of a decree from the *Führer*, the last living sons of families are to be withdrawn from combat-arms duties. This has the effect in our battery that *Gefreiter* Maltzahn will pull duty in the future in the trains and *Wachtmeister* Hetzert will be transferred to the [battalion] headquarters. *Gefreiter* Bartz, *Gefreiter* Andree and *Gefreiter* Molkenthin arrived back at the battery along with replacement crew vehicle 1.

26 January 1942: The battery conducted a noncommissioned officer course, led by *Leutnant* Seitz. Twelve *Obergefreiter* and *Gefreiter* took part.

30 January 1942: *Oberwachtmeister* Fechtner arrived at the battery. *Wachtmeister* Safoschnig had to be taken to the hospital. After only a few days there, he was moved back to Germany.

3 February 1942: The battery returned through Sarabus to Ukrainka. It has given up the hope of getting new guns.

12 February 1942: *Unteroffizier* Burde was promoted to *Unterwachtmeister* with an effective date of 1 February 1942.

13 February 1942: The battery was issued a heavy staff car (Horch) from the Army Vehicle Depot at Krakow.

14 February 1942: The noncommissioned officer candidate course has ended. The participants were tested by the Battery Commander at the very end. The results were thoroughly good. In the evening, the trainers and the course participants had an enjoyable party together.

15 February 1942: The battalion has been integrated into the defensive plan for Simferopol. To that end, it assembled a motorized infantry company (reserve) from the enlisted personnel. The leader is *Leutnant* Zäfer. The battery made the 2nd Platoon, under the command of *Wachtmeister* Raydt (1 platoon headquarters and

3 squads), available. It assembled and was briefed for the first time today at the location of the maintenance section. From henceforth, there will be an exercise every two days (until the movement to Seit-Assan).

16 February 1942: Start of driver's training for prime movers (In charge: *Gefreiter* Schleicher), trucks (*Unteroffizier* Weidlich) and motorcycles (*Gefreiter* G. Krüger).

17 February 1942: The battery received 1 *Kfz. 4* (Stoewer) and 1 *Kfz. 2/4* (Mercedes from *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 190*. *Unteroffizier* Gottschalk and *Gefreiter* Behmer received the War Merit Cross, 2nd Class, with Swords. The battery conducted familiarization firing at the range at Simferopol. The carbine was fired at targets at 150 meters in both supported and unsupported prone positions. Those issued pistols also fired with the *08* at silhouettes. The results were average.

18 February 1942: Machine-gun firing and hand grenade throwing at the range used by the 2nd Battery. The results were better this time.

19 February 1942: *Gefreiter* Magg and *Gefreiter* Lösch received the [General] Assault Badge.

22 February 1942: The battery received two old guns and two motorcycle-sidecar combinations (Zündapp) from *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 190*. The guns will have to be completely overhauled. It is not expected that they will be able to be employed for some time.

25 February 1942: *Wachtmeister* Hetzert has been transferred to Schweinfurt, effective immediately.

26 February 1942: *Wachtmeister* Thiel has been promoted to *Oberwachtmeister* with an effective date of 1 March 1942. He has been simultaneously designated as the Battery First Sergeant. *Gefreiter* Heynemann and *Gefreiter* Schleicher have been promoted to *Unteroffizier*.

28 February 1942: The battery received six new guns early in the morning (painted in Africa colors!). The battery then received orders to depart for the front around Kerch, where the Soviets have broken through east of Seit-Assan. Of the drivers who brought the guns, *Kanonier* Schymosch, *Kanonier* A. Schäfer and *Kanonier* Tschöcke have been retained [by the battery].

1 March 1942: The battery departed with six guns at 0600 hours in the morning. March route: Simferopol — Karassubasar — Stary-Krim — Islam-Terek (120 kilometers). Extremely difficult march over the iced-over road in the hills. There was still snow on the peaks of the Jaila Range. The gigantic woods are covered in frost. The road was extremely slick — the guns slipped and slid, but they made it through. Islam-Terek was reached at 1600 hours. After two hours, orders arrived that the battery was to take quarters in Seit-Assan. Immediate departure for there. A series of trucks remained stuck in the muck two kilometers east of Islam-Terek at a collective farm. Although the guns did their best to recover the vehicles, a portion of them — especially the motorcycles — had to remain behind. (Later on, the best was made of a bad situation: The collective farm was used as the permanent support point for the battery.) Arrival at Seit-Assan at 2200 hours. The quarters are bad. Some had to sleep in stalls. As time wore on, however, even the stalls were garnished properly, so that things got downright cozy.

2 March 1942: The battery remained a corps asset of the *XXXXII. Armee-Korps*. In case the enemy attacks in force, however, *Kampfgruppe Hitzfeld* has been authorized to employ the battery on its own. An attack has already been planned for the afternoon: Hill 25.3, the most dominant feature far and wide, is to be taken from the Soviets again. The entire battery is to be employed. The 2nd Platoon (2 guns) was already alerted at 0530 hours. It was intended for it to be attached to *Gruppe Daniel* in Kiet. In the most unbelievable muck, the platoon moved via Dshanskoj to the north towards Kiet (approximately 4 kilometers). It arrived there at 0700 hours. The platoon initially remained on stand-by in the village. At 1400 hours, the firing battery leader's gun and the 1st Platoon (which has 3 guns) moved into a depression south of [Hill] 25.3 in preparation [for the attack]. At 1500 hours, the 4 guns attacedk with the *I./[Infanterie-Regiment] 391*; the 2nd Platoon attacked with the *I./[Infanterie-Regiment] 105*. The direction of attack for both groups: [Hill] 25.3. The attack moved steadily ahead, well beyond expectations. Apparently, the Russians had been

[Hill] 25.3. The attack moved steadily ahead, well beyond expectations. Apparently, the Russians had been surprised. In spite of hazy weather and the worst-possible visibility, the battery eliminated 5 light antitank guns, 3 heavy mortars and 12 light machine guns. Given those conditions, the infantry had an easy time of it. At 1600 hours, the artillery fired a short barrage on top of and behind the hill. Just half an hour later, the *I./Infanterie-Regiment 105* crossed Hill 25.3! While smaller elements advanced further with the guns, the remaining elements dug in on the Hill. It was already starting to get dark when the battery returned. It initially remained behind [Hill] 25.3 to provide security, orienting to the east. It turned out to be a cold, but quiet night.

3 March 1942: It was intended for the battery to remain behind [Hill] 25.3, until antitank defenses had been established. The Battery Commander was able to arrange the withdrawal of three guns at noon (firing battery leader's gun and the 2nd Platoon). In the afternoon, the 1st Platoon was attacked from the air. There were no problems, however. Otherwise, nothing significant to report.

4 March 1942: Russian air attack on Seit-Assan. *Gefreiter* Fischer was slightly wounded on the left side of his head by shrapnel from bombs. In the evening, the 1st Platoon returned to Seit-Assan.

5 March 1942: Day of rest for the battery.

6 March 1942: Day of rest for the battery. Heavy frost and snow.

7 March 1942: Day of rest for the battery. Continued frost and snow. The guns are frozen to the ground. It takes hours until they can be freed up again. In the evening, it was found out that the steering linkage on three of the guns is broken. The guns need to be ready as soon as possible, since a large German counterattack is supposed to be launched in the next few days!

8 March 1942: Day of rest for the battery. Continued frost and snow. One Repairs to gun were finished during the night, resulting in the battery having four guns operational.

9 March 1942: Continued quiet. Work continued until late in the night on the remaining two guns.

10 March 1942: Day of rest for the battery. The remaining two guns have also been repaired.

11 March 1942: Day of rest. The intended attack has been postponed again. It has turned warmer — Thank God!

12 March 1942: Another day of rest. The planned attack still has not taken place.

13 March 1942: In the morning it was announced that the Soviets were planning a large-scale attack on Hill 25.3. The 2nd Platoon was alerted at 0730 hours (3 guns, with the battery officer gun led by *Unteroffizier* Wedler) — plenty late. Despite the slushy weather, the vehicles moved quickly forward. When the platoon reached the front, the Russian tanks had already penetrated the German main line of resistance. Our infantry were in the process of moving back to the second line of resistance. Moving forward, the platoon took up the unequal struggle. At that moment, the clutch on the "Z2" Gun started burning. It was able to be adjusted, but the gun could be moved neither forward nor backward. Even when the battery-officer vehicle hooked up to it, it could not be moved from the spot. By then, the Russian infantry had advanced to within 200 meters; the bulk of the Soviet tanks had already crossed over the hill. *Leutnant* Seitz gave the order to blow up the gun at that point. By then, the "E" Gun of *Oberwachtmeister* Schrödel had knocked out eight Russian tanks all by itself; the battery-officer gun of *Unteroffizier* Wedler had knocked out two more and damaged another two. By that moment, the first Russian infantry had arrived at the "Z2" Gun; a Russian was already climbing aboard (the demolition charge had failed to go off). The "E" Gun fired on the Russians and the "Z2" Gun, so that the gun would not fall undamaged into enemy hands. The effect of the fire was good. A short while later, the "E" Gun also received a hit in the front on the driver's hatch. The driver, *Gefreiter* Sudbrink, was burned on the face and had small wounds on the knee, hand and head. The gun was also lost, however, it was moved back to Seit-Assan in the evening. The battery-officer gun was then ordered back to the third

line of resistance, where antitank guns and Model 18 light field howitzers were in place. From there, the Russian attack was brought to a standstill. The enemy then increased the pressure on his left wing. There — at [Hill] 26.7 — was the 1st Platoon, which had been alerted at 0830 hours. This time, the Russians had a harder time of it. After initial success, the enemy was thrown back to his jumping-off points. The 1st Platoon eliminated seven enemy tanks, including three heavy ones.The afternoon was quieter. The battery-officer gun was pulled back in the evening. The 1st Platoon remained at [Hill] 26.7 overnight. There was occasional Russian harassment fire in the vicinity of the guns — otherwise, there were no incidents. During the afternoon, *Stabswachtmeister* Schmidt was wounded in the ear by artillery shrapnel in Seit-Assan.

14 March 1942: What the Soviets did not achieve yesterday — advancing as far as the Islam-Terek — Wladislawowka rail line — they tried to do today. At 0800 hours, they attacked with 15 tanks in the direction of [Hill] 26.7. The 1st Platoon — which could hardly be seen by the enemy — let the enemy approach to a short distance. It then cleaned up. Round after round raced towards the [enemy] tanks. In the blink of an eye, four Russian tanks had been destroyed; the remaining ones turned around as fast as possible. The second enemy attack took place at 0930 hours. This one was also brought to a standstill. A medium tank was destroyed. At approximately 1100 hours, the Russians advanced for a third time. This time, it was a battalion of infantry without any tanks. The battalion was literally torn apart by the three guns. At 1400 hours, the fourth attack was launched; this time with tanks again. The enemy was turned back again. The 1st Platoon eliminated four tanks. At 1730 hours, the three guns finished off a Russian battery (three 7.62-centimeter guns) and a 4.7-centimeter antitank gun that had pulled up into the open. At this point, the Soviets called it a day. At 1815 hours — it was already dark — the platoon was pulled back to Seit-Assan. The guns were refueled and rearmed in the dark, since they were supposed to go forward again very early in the morning…

15 March 1942: At 0500 hours, they actually moved forward. [Hill] 26.7 was the objective again. The guns went into ambush positions in a widely dispersed manner — mobile antitank defenses. Russian tank attacks were expected again. In fact, the Soviets attacked again at 0830 hours. The 1st Platoon knocked out three light tanks and also brought this attack to a standstill. There was another attack during the noon hour. The same negative result for the attackers; in addition, there was the loss of three tanks. Around 1730 hours, the 1st Platoon finally took care of the heavy tank that had been moving around in front of the friendly lines with true impudence during the entire afternoon. In addition, three antitank guns were destroyed. When it started to get dark, the platoon moved back to Seit-Assan. This afternoon, it was found out that *Leutnant* Spielmann had been mentioned by name in the *Wehrmacht* Daily Report for his successes on 13 and 14 March 1942.

16 March 1942: The battery detached the battery-officer gun along with its driver, *Gefreiter* Löffler, to the 2nd Battery. At 0500 hours, the 1st Platoon moved back to its old ambush position. The early part of the morning was quiet. The accustomed Russian attack did not start until 1115 hours. This time, it was with a large amount of tank support. The advance was turned back again. The 1st Platoon once again knocked out eight tanks! When the Soviets attacked again at 1400 hours, they lost another three medium tanks. That appeared to be enough for them today, since they did not attempt anything else through the evening. The platoon returned at dark. The battery discovered that *Oberwachtmeister* Schrödel has also been mentioned by name in the *Wehrmacht* Daily Report for his successes on 13 March 1942. The Division Commander of the *170. Infanterie-Division*, *Generalmajor* Sander, personally appeared in Seit-Assan today and expressed his thanks for the operations and the successes of the battery. On this occasion, he had *Oberwachtmeister* Schrödel report to him so as to personally express additional praise to him.

17 March 1942: The 1st Platoon went forward at its usual time, but did not fire a round today. The Russians are exhausted. They need to bring up reinforcements first. While the 1st Platoon waited in vain up front, the other elements of the battery in Seit-Assan received strong artillery fire and several Russian air attacks. As a result of those, *Stabswachtmeister* Schmidt was wounded by artillery shrapnel in the right thigh and right shoulder blade. The 1st Platoon returned when it turned dark.

18 March 1942: 1st Platoon in ambush position. The day passed quietly; occasional artillery and mortar fire. Return of the guns at the usual time. Replacement assault-gun drivers arrived in Ukrainka today.

19 March 1942: The 1st Platoon was alerted this time by 0430 hours. It was said that the Russians were planning another attack. In fact, they attacked at 0730 hours after a heavy artillery preparation. The attack was

turned back, but the enemy artillery fire continued. Once again, the Russians employed tanks — including a 52-ton one. The 1st Platoon eliminated several tanks; the remainder turned back. There was another Russian tank attack in the evening. This one was also unsuccessful. The "kills" on this day for the 1st Platoon raised its score by 3 heavy and 4 light tanks… During the fighting, the "Z1" Gun was hit on the driver's mantlet; in addition, there was a defect in the oil line. Although the driver, *Gefreiter* Golinski, was slightly wounded, he drove the gun back in 1st gear. When it started to turn dark, the remaining two guns followed.

20 March 1942: The Russians are pretty much exhausted in this sector. The time has come for a German counterattack. Today was the day for that attack. It was intended for a few tanks to advance from Wladislawowka to Tulumtschak, thus hitting the enemy in the flank. By doing that, all of the northern area of the Russian Front around Parpatsch would be rolled up. The 1st Platoon was already moving out to Point 26.7 at 0415 hours. It was intended for it to eliminate the threat of a flank attack by the enemy. However, the day passed quietly, to the surprise of everyone. Only artillery and mortar fire and low-level air attacks by the Soviets disturbed things. Otherwise, nothing of importance. The news arrived late in the evening that the planned major offensive had not had the desired success. Although Tulumtschak was taken, it was taken back by the Russians. The village changed hands several times during the day. In the evening, the 1st Platoon returned.

21 March 1942: The 1st Platoon departed in the morning at 0500 hours. Once again, it screened at Point 26.7. The day passed by without anything of significance happening. Return as darkness fell.

22 March 1942: The 1st Platoon departed as usual. Even before it got to the ambush position, it received the news that the enemy was approaching Point 26.7 with tanks and infantry. When the guns intervened, the enemy quickly turned away. Of the six [enemy] tanks that had forged ahead, one had already been knocked out by our antitank guns. Otherwise, the day passed quietly. The guns returned in the evening. Since no more larger-scale enemy attacks were expected, a portion of the battalion was able to be withdrawn. Besides, *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 249* is also available now. This marked the end of one of the proudest episodes of the battery's history. In the few days of its operations, it destroyed 59 Russian tanks and disabled another 4 tanks. On top of that were the eliminated artillery pieces, antitank guns, mortars and machine guns — truly, a proud balance! In the future, only four guns of the battalion are supposed to remain to screen in Seit-Assan. They are to be relieved every three days. The three guns of the 1st Platoon and one from the 2nd Battery are to remain here initially as well as the ammunition prime mover and the "Z3" command and control vehicle, which is absolutely needed to maintain communications with *Gruppe Hitzfeld* in Dshanskoj. The 2nd Battery is supply all of the remaining vehicles needed for supply. Non-essential personnel of our battery went back to Ukrainka at noon in the vehicles of the combat trains. They arrived there at 1600 hours.

23 March 1942: *Wachtmeister* Madaus and *Gefreiter* Prosetzki received the Iron Cross, Second Class in Seit-Assan; *Gefreiter* Schnaus received [the same award] in Ukrainka.

24 to 28 March 1942: Screening conducted by the *ad hoc* unit, led by *Leutnant* Spielmann in Seit-Assan. Nothing much more happened. Apparently, the Soviets have lost their appetite. Only a minor incident occurred. *Oberwachtmeister* Fechtner was slightly wounded on the nose and cheeks by bomb shrapnel on 24 March 1942. He remained up front, however. On 28 March 1942, three guns returned to Ukrainka. A new group, which consists of the 3rd Battery for the most part, conducted the relief. Only the command and control vehicle remained in Dshankoj and the ammunition vehicle remained here. They did not return to the battery until April. Six new *Obergefreiter* arrived.

29 March 1942: The noncommissioned officer corps sponsored a get-together, in which the Battalion Commander, his adjutant and all of the officers of our battery participated. The "evening" was a complete success. The partying continued on until noon the next day.

30 March 1942: Battalion formation. The Battalion Commander praised the performance of the batteries along the Kerch Front. He presented a number of awards, including members of our battery: Iron Cross, 1st Class: *Oberwachtmeister* Fechtner, *Wachtmeister* Madaus Iron cross, 2nd Class: *Unteroffizier* Drohne, *Unteroffizier* Kochan, *Gefreiter* Mörke, *Gefreiter* Magg,

31 March 1942: *Leutnant* Spielmann presented a class on "Russian Tanks and How to Engage Them" (After-Action report) to the officers, gun commanders and gunners of the battalion. *Leutnant* Konnak returned from his leave for studies. He was immediately transferred to the Battalion Headquarters.

3 April 1942: *Gefreiter* Backmeister received the War Service Cross, 2nd Class, with Swords.

4 April 1942: The battalion was mentioned in the *Wehrmacht* Daily Report. It has knocked out 200 tanks up to this point in the Russian Campaign. The Battalion Commander was awarded the German Cross in Gold.

9 April 1942: The battery was alerted early in the morning. It was said that the Russians had broken through one more time on the Kerch Front; the employment of the battery was necessary. It departed at 0600 hours. While taking a march break in Toply, the battery was attacked form the air. *Unteroffizier* Kochan was wounded. When the battery started to march again, it received news that it was supposed to turn around. Immediately thereafter, it was ordered back to Ukrainka. It arrived there at 1930 hours.

11 April 1942: *Leutnant* Spielmann was promoted to *Oberleutnant* with an effective date of 1 July 1941; *Leutnant* Preußer was promoted with an effective date of 1 April 1942.

12 April 1942: The Commanding General of the *XXXII. Armee-Korps* presented the Knight's Cross to *Oberleutnant* Spielmann in Stary-Krim. Battalion formation. The Battalion Commander spoke. *Oberleutnant* Spielmann reviewed the battalion.

16 April 1942: The battery was alerted during the night. As a result, the combat elements and the combat trains departed at 0630 hours. March route: Suja, Karassubasar, Stary-Krim, Kobek, 3 kilometers southwest of Islam-Terek. (March distance: 110 kilometers.)

17 April 1942: Day of rest for the combat elements and the combat trains in Kobek. The battery was put up in nice quarters. The entire village is Bulgarian. It is immediately apparent, because it is cleaner than where the Russians are. The leave plan of the battery went into effect today. One man can start leave just about every third day. *Gefreiter* Maltzahn was the lucky one, who was the first to go!

18 April 1942: Day of rest in Kobek.

19 April 1942: Day of rest in Kobek.

20 April 1942: Day of rest in Kobek (the *Führer's* birthday). Battery formation in the morning. *Gefreiter* Schlabs and *Gefreiter* Strohal were promoted to *Unteroffizier,* with an effective date of 1 April 1942. *Unteroffizier* Bachmeier received the Iron Cross, 1st Class. *Gefreiter* Henning, *Gefreiter* Riecker and *Gefreiter* Zimmermann received the Iron Cross, 2nd Class; *Gefreiter* Stock the War Service Cross, 2nd Class, with Swords. Departure at 1100 hours. The battery moved via Stary-Krim, Ssaly, Toply, Baschti-Eli to Bie-Eli at the foot of the Jaila Range. Arrival at 1600 hours. The battery took private quarters in the village, which is populated entirely by Tatars.

21 April 1942: Day of rest in Bie-Eli. The relationship with the Tatars is a cordial one. The majority of the young men in the village belong to the volunteer organization that has been employed in the mountains against the partisans.

22 April 1942: The battery-officer gun and the 2nd Platoon conducted an exercise with *Infanterie-Regiment 121* 2 kilometers west of Bie-Eli from 1415 o 1530 hours.

23 April 1942: The same exercise with the same [formation] at the same place (0700-1000 hours). Exercise with the 1st Platoon and *Infanterie-Regiment 123* at Ssaly from 0800-1100 hours. This same

date, the Battalion Commander presented *Oberwachtmeister* Schrödel with the German Cross in Gold. *Oberwachtmeister* Schrödel was just about to go on leave and was already sitting in the train when the Battalion Commander reached him…

24-29 April 1942: Days of rest in Bie-Eli. *Kanonier* Neureiter returned with the "M6" to the battery on 28 April 1942; *Oberkanonier* Höppner and *Oberkanonier* Lässig returned with the "CD" ammunition vehicle on 29 April 1942. That means that the last vehicle that had remained behind on the Kharkov — Simferopol stretch has returned to the battery.

30 April 1942: Departure of the combat elements and the combat trains to Kobek at 1800 hours. Arrival there at midnight.

1 May 1942: *Gefreiter* Henning was promoted to *Unteroffizier*. In addition, there were three new *Gefreiter*.

2 May 1942: Day of rest in Kobek.

3 May 1942: Day of rest in Kobek. Effective today, the battery has been attached to the *50. Infanterie-Division*.

4 May 1942: Day of rest in Kobek. Departure of the 2nd Platoon at 1900 hours to the fake assembly area 2 kilometers north of Barak (together with a platoon from the 3rd Battery).

5 May 1942: 2nd Platoon in the fake assembly area. Return to Kobek at 1830 hours.

6 May 1942: Departure of the battery at 1900 hours. Movement as it got dark via Nowo-Prokowka and Petrowka to Tambowka. Arrival there at 2100 hours. March distance: 25 kilometers.

7 May 1942: *Oberleutnant* Preußer, who has kidney stones, was transported from Simferopol to Germany in a hospital train. A large *Luftwaffe* operation with several hundred aircraft starting at 1400 hours against the Russian positions around Parpatsch. Battery formation at 1745 hours with the Battalion Commander present. The comments of the Commanding General of the *XXXII. Armee-Korps* concerning the start of the Kerch Offensive tomorrow were read aloud. Departure of the combat elements at 1900 hours to the assembly area 2 kilometers east of the railway triangle Wladislawowka-Daln — Kamyschi — Feodosia. They spent the night in a field.

8 May 1942: Attack on the Russian positions at Parpatsch at 0330 hours with the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 121*. Short but effective artillery and rocket-launcher preparation. The battery reached the mine obstacle without incident, but then had to halt. The battery-officer gun immediately ran over two mines in the twilight and became disabled. When the Battery Commander jumped out, a hand grenade tore off his left leg up to the knee. *Unteroffizier* Drohne was hit in the back by an antitank-gun round right after climbing out. He was killed immediately. When *Unteroffizier* Burde went to assist the Battery Commander, artillery shrapnel tore open his abdomen. *Wachtmeister* Raydt, the Battery Officer of the battery, was hit by an antitank-rifle round that went through the command and control vehicle from nearby. He died a few seconds later. *Gefreiter* Andree, the vehicle driver, was slightly wounded in the arm. Also wounded in different spots: *Gefreiter* K. Schmidt and *Gefreiter* Klewitz, as well as *Unteroffizier* Henning. *Oberleutnant* Spielmann assumed command of the battery. *Leutnant* Konnak — later on, *Wachtmeister* Gorgas — became the Battery Officer. Initially, the "C" Gun was taken over by *Unteroffizier* Schlabs; in the afternoon, by *Leutnant* Seitz. Right at 0400 hours, the *Luftwaffe* made a major effort over the battlefield. From the mine obstacle, the battery successfully engaged Russian infantry trenches in and behind the obstacle as well as enemy troop concentrations 2,000 meters away. It also eliminated several antitank guns and antitank rifles. A lane through the minefield was finally created by 1100 hours, but not yet marked. Because there was no time to be lost, *Leutnant* Seitz moved through it with the "Z2" Gun. The gun ran over a mine in the process, but the crew was able to dismount without taking any casualties. Things finally got moving forward at 1245 hours. The *II./Infanterie-Regiment 121*, which had suffered heavy casualties along with the combat

engineers, was relieved by the *III./Infanterie-Regiment 121*. The advanced forward then proceeded well. After two hours, the tank ditch was reached and, early in the evening, Hill 63.8 was taken. That meant the objective of the day had been taken! The battery remained right behind the limit of advance during the night to provide security. The combat trains and the maintenance section remained in Tombowka on this day and the following day as well.

9 May 1942: Attack with the *III./Infanterie-Regiment 121* toward Hill 63.2 (northeast). Progress was slow. The infantry was 300 meters in front of the hill by the evening. Once again, the battery destroyed a large number of heavy and light Russian weapons. By morning the "A" Gun of *Wachtmeister* Madaus had become disabled, since there was a rip in the main-gun mount. He had to return to the maintenance facility of *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 190* in Feodosia. In the evening, the "D" Gun of *Wachtmeister* Haberland also became disabled. The idler wheel had been hit. Late in the evening, it started to rain heavily and continuously; in the end, it took on the dimensions of a cloudburst. The next morning, all of the terrain was a morass. Any type of advance was coupled with indescribable difficulties.

10 May 1942: During the morning, the battery had to fend off very heavy Russian attacks on Hill 63.2 that were supported by 17 enemy tanks. We had taken the hill the previous night. In the process, several enemy tanks were knocked out. The "B" Gun got involved in a murderous duel with a KV I. The 44-ton tank was hit several times, resulting in it becoming immobilized. Despite that, it continued to put up heavy fire. In the meantime, the "B" Gun received a direct hit that forced the crew to bail out. Just after it had taken cover behind the gun, another round hit the front slope and the driver's hatch. The gun could not be moved back until the following evening. At 1100 hours, the battery-officer gun and the "Z2" Gun arrived. *Leutnant* Seitz took over the "Z2" Gun and *Oberwachtmeister* Fechtner the battery-officer gun. On the other hand, the "A" Gun had damage to its main-gun barrel, the road wheels and the idler wheel. As a result, it had to be taken to the rear. We were supposed to attack again at 1300 hours, but the attack was called off, because the *III./Infanterie-Regiment 121* was apparently no longer in a position to do so. It did not have a single machine gun left that functioned properly! There were only weapons left that were covered in muck; in addition, there was hardly any ammunition left. (Resupply along the muck-filled roads was extremely difficult.) Thanks to the selfless sense of duty of the ammunition vehicle drivers and resiliency of Koller's prime mover, our combat elements were always supplied with ammunition, fuel and rations on time! That night, the guns were again positioned behind the infantry to provide security.

11 May 1942: This day turned out to be one of the most successful ones for the battery. The three guns attacked to the north along with the *III./Infanterie-Regiment 121*. For a while, the battery helped out the reconnaissance battalion that was employed to the right and was not advancing so rapidly. Initially, everything advanced fairly rapidly. The enemy then employed his last reserves in the afternoon, and he succeeded in stopping the attack for a short while. When his remaining heavy weapons were taken out, however, his forces fell apart. There were hundreds of prisoners and thousands of deserters. The rest fled. The battery reached the Wladislawowka — Ssem —Kolodesey rail line in the vicinity of Ak-Monay. On this day, it had destroyed or captured six enemy tanks, one armored car, eight antitank guns, five antiaircraft guns, six howitzers and a number of light weapons. The "Z2" gun became disabled again in the evening. This time due to a burst barrel. It moved to the maintenance facility at Feodosia the next morning along with the "C" Gun. The remaining guns remained that night to provide security to the infantry.

12 May 1942: The "A" and "B" guns were operational again this morning. Just as the battery intended to advance further, it was called back, since there was no sign of the enemy far and wide. The operations in this sector are over. The combat elements then moved back to Feodosia, where the trains also went in the evening from Tambowka. That very morning, the Battalion Commander was able to award two Iron Crosses, 1st Class, and 10 Iron Crosses, 2nd Class.

13 May 1942: Day of rest in Feodosia. The vehicles were maintained. Nine General Assault Badges and one Iron Cross, 1st Class, were awarded to members of the combat elements. Effective today, the battery has been attached to the *28. Infanterie-Division*.

14 May 1942: Departed in the morning through Ssarigol to Daln.-Kamyschi; tank ditch and Arma-Eli to the rail line 1 kilometer east of Ssemissoyka. Arrival there at 0930 hours. At 1000 hours, continued to march along the axis of advance of the *28. Infanterie-Division*. March route: Along the rail line to Ssem-Kolodesey, through Tschokul, Argin-Tobetschik, Nowo-Nikolajewka to Alexejewka. Arrival there at 1630

hours. At 1800 hours, we marched again: Through Liebknechtowka to Andrejewka. Arrival there at 2030 hours. The battery spent the night on the meadows at the edge of the village.

15 May 1942: The battery has been attached to *Infanterie-Regiment 83*. The battery has had three guns from the 3rd Battery (under *Leutnant* Salamon) attached to it. An advance guard was formed: one and one half platoons of the *7./Infanterie-Regiment 83* rode along on our guns. The advance guard reached the rail line to Kerch without encountering any resistance. It moved along the rail line and then turned to the north in a suburb of Kerch. Katerles, northwest of Kerch, was reached without firing a shot. The advance guard ran into friendly tank forces there, which were supposed to advance to Cape Chroni. First light enemy resistance after passing Katerles. Together with the reconnaissance battalion, Hill 103.0 was taken early in the morning. We then screened to the east. The battery-officer gun and the "Z2" Gun got stuck around noon, when they attempted to pull the commander's vehicle out of uncharted terrain. The battery advanced with the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 83* towards Cape Tarchan at 1500 hours. Light enemy resistance was broken; the objective was reached after an hour. The results of this rapid operation: Hundreds of prisoners! The "Z2" Gun, which was able to extricate itself, arrived. A new attack with the *I./Infanterie-Regiment 83* started from the old jump-off positions. Direction: Northeast. Fighting until the onset of darkness. For the first time, we were able to spot Russian naval forces in the Sea of Azov that were within striking distance. Fortunately, the flotilla remained passive. Our guns fired a few rounds in their direction, but they had no effect, since the range was too great. The combat trains followed through the suburbs of Kerch and Katerles to the machine- and tractor station 1 kilometer south of Hill 103.0.

16 May 1942: At 0200 hours in the morning, the Russians made a desperate attempt to break out 1.5 kilometers west of the battery assembly area. The crews were alerted, but did not need to become involved. The enemy was thrown back in bloody close combat with the infantry and the trains elements of the armored division. In the morning, the battery moved to Bulgansk with eight guns (with the battery-officer gun but without the "D" Gun, which had become disabled the previous evening with engine problems). The battery was attached to *Infanterie-Regiment 49* and advanced with it to the northeast. This initially happened without any fighting. A new assembly area was occupied 1.5 kilometers east of Jurakow-Kut, where the tanks were advancing along the coastline. At 1300 hours, attack to the southeast towards Hill 175.0. Initially, the advance proceeded rapidly forward. Everything appeared to be happening in accordance to plan. Around 1500 hours, however, an unfortunate turn of events happened. Several Soviet divisions, which were waiting on the coast to be shipped out, realized their devilish predicament and defended themselves by launching a desperate assault. A very critical situation arose for our forces for several hours, especially since the light tank forces and motorcycle elements committed to the left soon pulled back to everyone's surprise. The Soviets assaulted with a wild "Urräh". The friendly infantry, relatively weak, had an extremely difficult time of it but was able to hold the line by and large. Tanks and assault guns did their part. The battery eliminated several Russian guns, including several antiaircraft pieces, which had been employed in a ground role. The "Z2" Gun was hit several times. A roadwheel was torn off; another one was badly damaged. When the gun attempted to move down the hill to get into a covered position, it threw a track. The crew dismounted 50 meters in front of the Russian lines and fought its way back to friendly lines. The gun was in Russian hands for hours during the night. The Soviets took anything useable out of it. An attempt by them to fire it failed, since they were not familiar with the operation of the breechblock. That night, wild infantry fires could be heard in assembly area 2 kilometers to the rear. Firing like that had never been heard before. The trains moved to Jurakow-Kut on the Sea of Azov on this day and remained there until the end of the fighting.

17 May 1942: This day was supposed to bring about the decision. Artillery has been brought up; *Stukas* have been bombing the village of Majak, the main pocket of resistance, over and over again. Rocket launchers fired several times. *Infanterie-Regiment 49,* which had taken high casualties, has been relieved by *Infanterie-Regiment 83*. At noon, the attack started along the entire line. Salamon's platoon advanced on the right wing in the direction of Baksy, which was taken around 1500 hours. The remaining guns attacked Hill 175.0 with the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 83*. It was also taken. Once again, a number of Russian guns and machine guns could be reported as having been destroyed. The Russians now only have individual, scattered guns; in their place, light naval forces and the artillery from the area across the water send over their greetings. Fortunately, our *Stukas* silence most of the batteries fairly quickly. The Russian flotilla pulled back rapidly. The "A" Gun of *Wachtmeister* Madaus received a hit in the engine compartment by an antitank-rifle round and started burning. By the time the crew noticed what was going on, there was nothing left to be saved. The gun burned out almost completely. The maintenance section was only able to save a few parts the next day. The "Z1" Gun was also hit in the rear. The radiator was bent and the fuel tank is leaking. The gun had to be towed by two captured Russian prime movers. The Battery Commander initially remained with the command and control vehicle, but he was unable to stay behind in the rear any longer in the afternoon and took over the battery-officer gun.

18 May 1942: The battery advanced to the sea between Majak and Opossnaja with *Infanterie-Regiment 83*. The battery reached the coast without firing a shot. From there, it fired into Opossnaja, which was still occupied by the Russians. A short while later the battery turned around and moved back. On the way back, however, it was called back in the direction of Opossnaja. It was claimed that Russian tanks had landed on the coast. The report did not correspond to the facts, however, and, as a result, the battery marched back to Majak. During the afternoon, the main attack was launched around the Majak lighthouse. The Soviets who were encircled there defended with the courage of desperation. In the evening, the lighthouse fell into our hands; it had already been heavily devastated by artillery, tanks and assault guns. The enemy was not completely eliminated until the onset of darkness, however. Completely obstinate, he held out in a large defile between the lighthouse and the sea. The battery moved back to the outskirts of Bakay in the evening. There was a lot of Russian air activity at night. One bomb fell 50 meters from a gun; the completely exhausted crew did not even notice it…

19 May 1942: *Leutnant* Seitz took over the "Z2" Gun again; *Wachtmeister* Haberland the "D" Gun. In the morning, the lighthouse was attacked again with four of our guns, three from Salamon's platoon and a number of tanks. Prior to that, a few noncommissioned officers an enlisted personnel fired off several rounds from a Russian antiaircraft gun in Majak at Russian transport ships in the Straits of Kerch. To the amazement of all concerned, one of the ferries was hit and damaged, although the gun had been aimed without sights. The new attack on the Russians in the defile quickly came to an end. After a few rounds, a white flag became visible. The last Russians gave up when a few courageous infantrymen jumped into the defile, followed shortly thereafter by three light *Panzer 38 t's*. Up to then, we had counted on several hundred prisoners. The surprise was that much greater when endless columns appeared. It was later determined that there were more than 8,000 prisoners! The battery moved at noon to its old stand-by position and spent a magnificent afternoon under radiant sunshine. Effective this date, by order of the battalion, *Oberleutnant* Spielmann has been designated as the Commander of our battery!

20 May 1942: Effective this date, the battery has been attached to the *46. Infanterie-Division*. It moved out early in the morning towards Jenikale. Elements of the *7./Infanterie-Regiment 72* mounted up. We thought the fighting would soon be over. On the way there, a motorcycle messenger who was pulled over stated that there was no more fighting in Jenikale. The battery then waited for further orders. At 0900 hours, the Battalion Commander reported by radio that he was already at the citadel. Everybody breathed easier; they thought that things were coming to a complete end… But there was still work to be done. The last resistance at Kapkany and the "Wojkow" Iron Works had to be broken. The attack started at 1300 hours. Kapkany was taken in house-to-house fighting. The battery supported the infantry doing that as well as it could. The enemy no longer had any heavy weapons there. At 1430 hours, the first assault guns from *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 249*, which was carrying on the attack from the west, were spotted. After half an hour, all of the terrain, with the exception of the iron works, was in German hands. Our guns could not drive into the slag heaps. Infantry, artillery and rocket launchers also finished up matters here in a thorough fashion. More than 1,000 prisoners had already been taken in Kapkany; there, at the iron works, another 4,000 were taken. More than 1,000 Soviet dead remained on the battlefield. The battery went back through Dshankoj to Bakzy at 1700 hours and took up private quarters in the village.

21 May 1942: Day of rest in Baksy. The battery has been attached to *Infanterie-Regiment 97* in case any pockets of resistance that surface have to be put down. But there were no more operations.

22 May 1942: Departure at 0500 hours via Jurakow-Kut — where the trains joined up — and Bulganak to Kerch. Arrival there at 0730 hours. At 0830 hours, the march continued via Ssarajmin, Usun-Ajak, tank ditch, Daln.-Kamyschi and Ssarygol to Feodosia. Arrival there at 1500 hours. March distance: 130 kilometers.

23 May 1942: *Leutnant* Ulbricht has been transferred back to our battery, effective immediately. The guns, command and control and ammunition prime movers are supposed to rail loaded the next day in Ssarygol and remain, for that reason, in Feodosia. The remaining vehicles departed Feodosia at 0800 hours. March route: Stary-Krim, Karassubasar, Suja, Simferopol (110 kilometers). Arrival in Ukrainka at 1230 hours.

24 May 1942: *Oberleutnant* Spielmann and *Oberwachtmeister* Schrödel received special certificates of recognition from the *Führer* for their performance of duty in March against Kerch. It became known that the tracked vehicles would not be loaded for five days. At that point, the battalion issued orders to depart via road march. Departure at Feodosia at 0600 hours. Arrival in Ukrainka at 2230 hours.

25 and 26 May 1942: No entries.

27 May 1942: *Unteroffizier* Heynemann was transferred to the branch school. To this end, he was to be transferred to Schweinfurt immediately and sent on his way.

28 May 1942: *Oberwachtmeister* Fechtner was designated as an Officer Candidate with an effective date of 1 May 1942.

29 May 1942: The battalion organized a competitive shoot at the range run by the 2nd battery. Every unit entered 15 marksmen. The three conditions for Shooting Class II were fired. Our battery won the 1st prize for enlisted personnel and also entered the 2nd, 3rd and 4th winners in the individual category — a result to be proud of! Prizes for the winners were cigarettes and chocolate. That evening, a course was started for gunners by *Oberwachtmeister* Fechtner and a course for loaders by *Oberwachtmeister* Schrödel.

1 June 1942: Six *Gefreiter* were promoted to *Obergefreiter*.

5 June 1942: According to the [new] table of organization and equipment, the battery is only allowed to have 117 men now. Because of that, it dispatched 23 noncommissioned officers and enlisted personnel to the replacement detachment in Schweinfurt. In the evening, at 1745 hours, the "reduced battery" held a formation for the first time in the new summer uniform. For the first time since our unit was formed, there was a completely uniform appearance. The Battery Commander spoke for a short while concerning the importance of the reorganization of the battery. The Battery Commander convinced himself of the uniformity and the fit of the uniforms in the middle of pouring rain. It was announced that the battery would move out for the front around Sevastopol tomorrow at noon.

6 June 1942: Battery departed from Ukrainka at 1200 hours. March route: Chan-Eli, Bachtschissaray, Sjuran (train station), Salakoy. From there, it went through "Northern Route II" to an assembly area 2.5 kilometers northeast of Kamyschly (a total of 70 kilometers). Arrival at 1700 hours. The battery spent the night in the open. Heavy German air activity starting at noon. Heavy German artillery fire late in the evening.

7 June 1942: Offensive along the northern front around Sevastopol at 0300 hours in the morning! Very heavy artillery preparation lasting three quarters of an hour. Massive employment of the *Luftwaffe*. The battery has been attached to the *50. Infanterie-Division* and is in support of *Infanterie-Regiment 123*. It remained for the time being in its assembly area, in order to relieve on call the 2nd Battery, which is in support of the same regiment. It got to that point at 1215 hours. Although the 2nd Battery had not yet reached the designated point — the forestry building — it had taken heavy casualties. The first position for the combat elements to wait at was at the western exit of the Melzer Defile. The second waiting point was 1 kilometer southwest of Kamyschly. (This new place has been designated "Support Point I" for the next few days. The ammunition and command and control vehicles will wait there. The guns will also return there every evening.) In the evening, there was an attack with the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 123*, the *III./Infanterie-Regiment 123* and, for a time, a battalion from *Infanterie-Regiment 47*. It was intended to create the prerequisites for a better jumping-off position over the next few days. The advance went slowly. Individual Russian bunkers and hidden pockets of resistance created an uncomfortable situation; in addition, it was rapidly getting dark. The battery "busted" a few bunkers and took care of a number of Russian machine guns. At 2000 hours, the infantry was just outside of Point 713. It pulled back, however, since the new position was worse than the old point of departure. The battery moved in darkness back to the support point.

8 June 1942: Attack at 0700 hours with elements of *Infanterie-Regiment 121* and *Infanterie-Regiment 123*. Once again, progress was extremely slow. Individual Russian pockets of resistance that could not be seen held up the advance over and over again. In addition, the mountainous, wooded terrain offered the defender all of the advantages. It was hard to make out the Russian snipers, machine-gun nests and, above all, the observation posts of the enemy's artillery. Our guns had to adjust their positions over and over again, because the visibility between the vegetation and the trees was extremely poor. Although the guns had been camouflaged, they had attracted the enemy artillery fire on themselves in the blink of an eye. The infantry,

who were in the vicinity of the guns, had constant casualties. Point 713 was reached at 0930 hours, but the attack wavered at that point. The battery first had to take out several hidden pockets of resistance, before the attack could start up again at 1115 hours. This time, things progressed rapidly. One kilometer was covered in an hour. In those damned woods that was a mighty accomplishment! Then the attack bogged down for a second time, because the left wing could not keep up. At 1700 hours, it finally got started again. After a heavy preparation by *Stukas* and rocket launchers, the infantry took the hill north of Point 711, which dominated the terrain far and wide. By doing so, it had an extremely good point of departure for the next day. Around 1800 hours, two Soviet tanks — T 60's — appeared on the hill off to the side across from us. The battery destroyed the two tanks within a minute. The infantry breathed a sigh of relief and started to dig in. The lead elements were right at Point 711. The Battery Commander was wounded by shrapnel in the lower lip during the fighting. His gun had a crack in the clutch housing, causing it to be disabled for the time being. The remaining guns also moved back to the support point at 1945 hours.

9 June 1942: The remaining available guns went forward in the morning with *Oberleutnant* Seitz at 0415 hours. Shortly after arriving at the limit of advance, *Unteroffizier* Kochan was wounded under the left eye by artillery shrapnel. He stayed and fought, however. The attack that had been planned for 0600 hours was called off for an unspecified time. The attack started finally towards noon at 1130 hours. On his own initiative, *Hauptmann* Lorenzen (*I./Infanterie-Regiment 121*) issued the order to attack for his battalion. Despite the exposed flank, the infantry stormed the high ground across the way on the double. The battery provided cover by fire. In half an hour, the 1st and 3rd Companies were on the hill to the right. The 2nd Company and the attached bicycle troop bogged down on the left, about half way up, in front of hidden bunkers. The battery could not fire there, because it would have endangered friendly infantry. The Guns moved to Point 4946 and then back to the support point at 1930 hours.

10 June 1942: Departure at 0400 hours in the morning with five guns (the "D" Gun was commanded by *Unteroffizier* Flintrop in lieu of *Unteroffizier* Kochan). The battery provided cover by fire from the high ground that was taken yesterday, which is now completely in our hands. It destroyed several bunkers and machine-gun nests. In the process, it received very intense artillery fire. The "Z2" Gun of *Oberwachtmeister* Fechtner received a direct hit. The loader, *Kanonier* Rüdiger, was killed instantly. *Oberwachtmeister* Fechtner and *Gefreiter* Prezler got away with relatively light wounds. The battery remained to provide security for the *I./Infanterie-Regiment 121*. The Battery Commander arrived with his gun and assumed command again. There were no more attacks on this day. The guns were under extremely heavy artillery fire for periods of time. Fortunately, nothing happened. At 1920 hours, the battery marched back to the support point. At the support point, the battery experienced a Russian air attack at 2100 hours — in complete darkness. Several bombs landed in the vicinity of the battery-officer gun and the "Z1" Gun. In the course of the attack, two rocket launchers and their rounds, two of their prime movers, two ammunition vehicles from *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 190* and a Model 18 heavy howitzer went up in smoke. After the shrapnel from the bombs, the rocket-launcher rounds whiled through the air — a panic-inducing sight. Some worrisome moments for everyone. *Gefreiter* Sauer had his left lower thigh penetrated; *Gefreiter* Röder has two large pieces of shrapnel in his left buttock and in his left upper thigh. Both of the *Gefreiter* had to go to the hospital. In the end, *Gefreiter* Backmeister also followed, since he had also been wounded (upper thigh). Relatively slight wounds had been sustained by the Battery Commander (head), *Unteroffizier* Schleicher (twice in the legs) and *Gefreiter* Höppner (arm). *Gefreiter* Rieker fell in the darkness and sustained a bad bruise. He had to go back to Ukrainka. The same for *Gefreiter* Höppner. The remaining trains elements in Ukrainka were also attacked from the air during the night. A series of fire bombs were dropped. One of them fell into the quarters of *Obergefreiter* Pries and went through his bed. Fortunately, he was not there at the time; instead, he was outside of Sevastopol! Otherwise, there was no damage of significance. The next morning, 17 duds were collected in the area of the battery.

11 June 1942: Departure in the morning at 0700 hours with four guns. A torsion bar had broken on the gun of *Wachtmeister* Haberland. He had to return to the combat trains as a result.The battery screened to the east for the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 121*. Attack with the *5./Infanterie-Regiment 121* on Russian bunkers and field positions 150 meters north of the "attack axis" at 1600 hours. A number of bunkers were destroyed. Very heavy Russian artillery, antitank-rifle and sniper fire. In addition, there were only limited ways the battery could be employed. Our forces were already one kilometer south of the attack axis, limiting firing to the shortest possible distance. The assault guns and the infantry were bogged down for three full hours, until some stout-hearted infantry smoked out the bunkers with satchel charges. The Russians then started to flee. The battery immediately let loose with a few rounds among them. The effect was excellent and more than half of the Russians were taken out. The friendly infantry could then occupy the bunkers. The battery moved back to the support point at 1930 hours. There was again heavy Russian aerial activity during the night.

12 June 1942: The combat elements had a free morning. They finally had the chance to get a good sleep. As a special treat afterwards, everyone got to wash up. 1.5 liters of water were available for each man. There was occasional light artillery fire on the support point. *Wachtmeister* Haberland was wounded in the arm, but he remained with the battery. At approximately 1030 hours, the long-desired rain set in. But it did not last long, so that it continued to raise a cloud of dust whenever any vehicle moved. Five guns of the battery departed at 1300 hours. The "B" Gun of *Wachtmeister* Haberland broke down shortly after departing, however. *Unteroffizier* Flintrop took over and took it to the maintenance facility to be repaired. Added to the four guns of the battery was then a fifth one, that of *Unteroffizier* Albinus from the *2./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197*. At 1600 hours, the battery attacked with *Bataillon Bärenfänger* (*III./Infanterie-Regiment 123*) from the road. After a few minutes, the battery-officer gun ran over a mine. Fortunately, it was able to pull back a bit under its own power, so that the crew could dismount safely. *Oberleutnant* Seitz then took over command of the guns again. The battery could not advance at this point, since the danger from the mines was too great. As a result, the guns screened to the east and fired a few rounds. For a while, there was heavy Russian artillery fire in the vicinity, but the battery was spared the loss of any vehicles. The guns returned to the support point at 1930 hours. In the evening, the Battery Commander awarded *Oberwachtmeister* Haberland the Iron Cross, 1st Class.

13 June 1942: Departure in the morning at 0400 hours with four guns. March route: *Stephanusweg* as far as the tank ditch, then on the road to the east. The battery was summoned back from there. It was intended for it to have a day of rest for maintenance. That meant an immediate return to the support point; from there with the remaining vehicles to the combat trains. Maintenance was performed for a short while, then everyone washed up. With the horrible heat and the almost crazy development of dust, this was something that really felt good. The temperature read 38 degrees at noon [100.4 degrees Fahrenheit]. Everyone was laying in the shade and resting. During the evening it was announced that our Battery Commander was named once again in the *Wehrmacht* Daily Report — this time for the operations around Sevastopol.

14 June 1942: The three guns that are operational now have been attached to the 2nd Battery for today and placed under the command of *Oberleutnant* Kuntze. Departure at 1300 hours as part of the 2nd Battery to the road. There were no operations. The guns were released from their attachment at noon. It was intended for them to relieve the 3rd Battery. Immediate departure for the new assembly area. Attack with the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 122* to the southeast at 1645 hours. The objective of the day was reached within 50 minutes. The Russians were tossed out of bunkers and field fortifications. In the process, the battery completely destroyed three Russian guns. In the evening, return to the new strongpoint, Strongpoint II (in the vicinity of Point 713). The ammunition and command and control vehicles had already moved there in the morning. Three canisters of beer made it forward at 2130 hours, to the pleasant surprise of everyone. After the colossal heat — 30 degrees in the shade [86 degrees Fahrenheit] and 50 degrees in the guns [122 degrees Fahrenheit] — the beverage tasted terrific to everyone.

15 June 1942: Quiet in the morning. Departure of three guns under *Oberleutnant* Seitz at 1230 hours. After a lot of back and forth, there was finally an attack with a Rumanian battalion in the direction of the crossing point in the woods at 1830 hours. The attack proceeded well, although the Rumanian soldiers had a preternatural respect for the Russian bunkers. The dashing Rumanian officers rallied their men forward again and again, standing upright as they advanced. Our guns moved up to within a few meters of the bunkers and the trench lines. The crews then threw hand grenade after hand grenade into the positions. That helped spur the Rumanians forward. In addition, the battery eliminated a number of distant targets. Several mortars and guns, as well as a tank, were eliminated in that fashion. By the fall of darkness, the Rumanian infantry was three meters from the crossing point in the woods. The battery moved back to the support point. Light rain during the night.

16 June 1942: Day of rest for the battery. The "E" Gun (*Oberwachtmeister* Schrödel) had damage to its main gun; a torsion bar was broken on the "B" Gun (*Unteroffizier* Flintrop). Both had to go to the combat trains to be repaired. Although the "D" Gun (*Unteroffizier* Kochan) is operational, the Battalion Commander was able to ensure that both of the remaining operational guns had a day of rest.

17 June 1942: The battalion was attached to the *24. Infanterie-Division,* effective today. The battery itself has been directed to support *Infanterie-Regiment 31*. Departure in the morning at 0400 hours with four guns and both of the ammunition vehicles. The Battery Commander had the "D" Gun, thus taking over direct control. Attack with the *I./Infanterie-Regiment 31* on the GPU fort at 0630 hours. The battery breathed a sigh of relief! Finally, no more woods or vegetation! Practically without firing a shot, the old fort was

reached after an hour. The infantry and the assault guns could not advance any further, since the friendly forces to the left and right had not advanced as far. The battery screened to the southwest (northern fort) and northwest (the "Molotov" fortifications). Very heavy Russian artillery fire. The "D" Gun was hit, which, among other things, almost tore off a roadwheel. When the gun attempted to move back after an hour, it received another hit, which sliced off a return roller and knocked a hole in the side of the hull. The Battery Commander suffered bad burns on his lower arms and hands. *Unteroffizier* Schlabs was burnt on the head. *Obergefreiter* Pries had less severe burns on a hand. It could have been worse. The gun had to be left there for the time being. It got to Strongpoint II in the evening, however, and was able to be driven back to the combat trains the following morning. After coordinating with the supported battalion commander, the battery pulled back due to the extremely heavy artillery fire. It initially went back to the "military facilities" and then 1 kilometer north of them. On the way, the "B" Gun (*Unteroffizier* Flintrop) was hit, tearing off a roadwheel, a roadwheel arm and a shock absorber. The gun had to go to the combat trains to be repaired. Both of the remaining guns were combined with the rest of the guns of the 2nd Battery to form a new unit under the command of *Oberleutnant* Seitz. An attack was slated to possibly take place on the cemetery at Bartenjewka that afternoon. The battery waited until the evening without an attack being ordered. It was ordered back to the strongpoint at 1830 hours.

18 June 1942: Departure in the morning at 0300 hours with three guns, since the "B" Gun is operational again. *Oberleutnant* Seitz assumed command. The guns rolled towards the GPU fort through a sea of fine dust that penetrated through the smallest of cracks. Attack with the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 31* at 0530 hours against Bartenjewka and the cemetery to the east. The objective of the day later on was the Bay of Ssewernaja. The attack proceeded quite quickly initially. Bartenjewka was reached without serious fighting. The light enemy resistance in the village was quickly broken. The battery eliminated several bunkers, especially in the area of the aircraft-engine factory south of the village. Most of the bunkers burned for hours on end, since fuel or something similar had been hidden in them. *Oberwachtmeister* Schrödel was wounded in the shoulder, back and arm by an explosive round. He had to be taken to the rear, and the gun was sent back to the military facilities. The "scissors" scope on the "B" Gun was shot to pieces. It remained in the fight, however. By 0700 hours, the village of Bartenjewka and the cemetery were in our hands. Friendly infantry was already in front of the rail line, 1 kilometer away from the bay. The infantry was going to remain there initially; the battery screened from the cemetery. The attack was continued at 1045 hours. Initially, it was only done with two guns, but the "B" Gun with *Wachtmeister* Haberland showed up 15 minutes later and joined the attack. Because the guns could not negotiate the steep embankment, they advanced on the west side of the rail line to the south. They had to halt about 600 meters before reaching the bay, however, since there were not enough infantry for advancing any further. Individual pockets of resistance along the rail line and in the area of the torpedo docks were eliminated. A built-in 7.62-centimeter cannon was destroyed. At approximately 1100 hours, heavy Russian mortar fire suddenly started. The battery pulled back to the cemetery, because there were better opportunities to seek cover there. While moving over the cemetery wall and across the adjoining steep ditch, the "Z1" Gun suffered a transmission failure and became disabled. It should be noted that it was able to reach the strongpoint under its own power. Because the fuel tank was leaking on the "B" Gun, the remaining two guns were also pulled back. That same afternoon, the "Z1" Gun was towed to the combat rains by the "B" Gun. The "E" Gun was the only one remaining in the strongpoint. In the evening, it was discovered that the oil filter on the "E" Gun was not operating properly. That meant that the entire battery was unavailable for the time being.

19 June 1942: Day of rest for the battery. The Maintenance Officer looked at the guns and decided: The "B" and *"Deutschland"* Guns needed to go to the battalion maintenance facility at Ukrainka. They were sent on their way immediately. The "Z1" Gun would be evacuated later with the low boy. The "E" Gun and Ammunition Prime Mover I were detailed to the 2nd Battery. The assault-gun ammunition in the strongpoint was transferred to the 2nd Battery.

20 June 1942: The battery moved back to Ukrainka. The departure took place in echelons in the morning. March route: Duwankoj, Bachtschissary, Chan-Eli, Simferopol. Late in the evening, *Hauptwachtmeister* Thiel was taken to the hospital (kidney problems). For a few days, either *Unteroffizier* Kochan or *Oberwachtmeister* Fechtner assumed the duties of the *Hauptwachtmeister* (*Spieß*). When *Wachtmeister* Madaus returned from leave, he assumed these duties.

21 June 1942: The battery detailed the "D" Gun and Ammunition Prime Mover II for the production of an engineer training film today and tomorrow. The filming is being done in the area around the tank ditch 300 meters north of Ukrainka.

23 June 1942: The battery received news of the death of *Gefreiter* Röder, who succumbed to the wounds he had sustained on 11 June 1942 outside of Sevastopol. *Wachtmeister* Haberland was promoted to *Leutnant* with an effective date of 1 June 1942 and was transferred to the 3rd battery, effective immediately.

30 June 1942: The battery-officer gun (with Leutnant Ulbricht) and the "B" Gun (with *Unteroffizier* Kochan) have been sent back to Sevastopol again. They have been attached to the 2nd Battery for the additional fighting.

1 July 1942: The "E" Gun (*Unteroffizier* Flintrop), which has engine problems, returned from Sevastopol. It had been employed together with the 2nd Battery on several occasions against the aircraft-engine factory and against the "white cliffs". *Wachtmeister* Madaus was promoted to *Oberwachtmeister*, effective immediately.

2 July 1942: The Battery Commander went on leave. He will initially be covered by *Leutnant* Ulbricht; later on, it will be *Oberleutnant* Seitz.

3 July 1942: The last two guns returned from Sevastopol. They did not fire at all. The fighting for Sevastopol has ended in a victory.

4-6 July 1942: A mixed unit from our battalion has been sent to Arma-Eli along with the *50. Infanterie-Division* for a film production. Our battery has provided 2 guns, 1 officer-in-charge and 1 ammunition vehicle. *Oberleutnant* Wegelin has been entrusted with leading the *ad hoc* battery.

5 July 1942: *Unteroffizier* Flintrop received the Iron Cross, 1st Class. *Gefreiter* Bartz, *Gefreiter* Horrer, *Gefreiter* Paulus and *Kanonier* Bauermeister have been decorated with the Iron Cross, 2nd Class.

7 July 1942: *Leutnant* Loeck returned to the battery.

16-30 July 1942: The "Dshankoj" Gun (commanded by *Oberwachtmeister* Madaus) is conducting water-loading exercises along with a gun each from the 2nd and 3rd Battery. Location: Kasantip on the Sea of Azov. *Leutnant* Kretschmer (Headquarters Battery) was detailed to the battery effective 23 July 1942.

27-28 July 1942: The battery spent several terrific days of rest on the Black Sea. The small "tent city" was located 2 kilometers east of Gursuff. We had the opportunity to fully recover for five full days. There was no time for boredom with bathing, getting some sunshine, playing sports, reading and pleasant evenings among comrades (one time with a whole lot of sparkling wine!). They were unforgettable days for everyone. Unfortunately, the battery was called away prematurely. Departure from Simferopol at 0400 hours on 22 July 1942; return at 1200 hours on 28 July 1942.

28 July 1942: The battery received a new staff car (Ford) and two new trucks (Peugeot). It had previously turned in 2 staff cars, 1 truck and 4 medium motorcycles.

29 July 1942: It was intended for a battalion party to take place out in the open during the evening. Unfortunately, it had to be cancelled. The battery will rail load tomorrow. Items were packed and loaded until late into the night. Despite that, beer was distributed. A few got into the swing of things quickly, and the keg was soon empty.

30 July 1942: The Battery Commander returned from leave this morning. The rail loading was postponed until around noon, since the rail cars for the battery had not yet arrived. By 1130 hours, things were finally ready. Even though there was only one ramp available and a portion of the Headquarters Battery also had to be loaded on our train, the battery was finished at 1930 hours. Departure in the direction of Dshanskoj at 2130 hours. A lot of guessing on the part of everyone where we were going.

31 July 1942: The battery was in Dshanskoj at first light. The movement continued at 0600 hours. The Siwasch was crossed at 0645 hours, meaning we were back in Ukrainian territory again. Arrival at Melitopol at 1230 hours and in Saporoshje at 1900 hours. Sinelnjkowo was reached that same night.

1 August 1942: In Losowaja in the morning. The movement did not continue until 1330 hours. Large breaks in the movement while underway since there were problems with the locomotive. A rainy day.

2 August 1942: In Kharkov in the morning at 0400 hours; in Bjelgorod at 1000 hours. Continued light rain. Arrival in Korowino at 1700 hours, around 40 kilometers outside of Kursk. Unloaded quickly there and occupied quarters for the night.

3 August 1942: Departure via Saubotino, Sawinez and Manturowa at 0500 hours. Just outside of Time, we turned to the east (*Rollbahn K*). Moved via Gorschetnoje to Jassenki (a total of 140 kilometers). Good weather. The road started to dry out slowly. Quarters for the night at a collective farm, but in the open.

4 August 1942: Departure at 0800 hours via Nishnedewizi as far as the collective farm 500 meters west of Turowo. Good weather; firm road.

5 August 1942: Continued through Turowo, Nischne-Weduga and Stadniza to Semljansk (final march objective). Arrival there around mid-day. Set up quarters in a small patch of woods somewhat outside of the city.

6-10 August 1942: Days of rest in Semljansk. On 9 August 1942, the battery occupied quarters in people's houses. The battery has been allocated to the *2. Armee*. It has been earmarked as the corps' mobile reserve for the *VII. Armee-Korps*.

11 August 1942: The battery was alerted at 1845 hours. Departure 15 minutes later of the combat elements and the combat trains to Malo-Werejka. The night was spent at a collective farm not too far away.

12 August 1942: Departure to Maloprokowka and the *340. Infanterie-Division* in the morning at 0245 hours. The combat elements (5 guns and all of the ammunition transporters and command and control vehicles) moved on to Iltinowka. Numerous Russian tanks had broken through yesterday north of this village. Right now, however, it is relatively quiet. The 2nd Platoon, along with infantry, cleared a grain field of dismounted Russian tankers. The field was behind the limit of advance. The remaining three guns moved to the eastern outskirts of Fedorowka. They were not employed, but were exposed to heavy enemy artillery fire for periods of time. The "Z2" Gun (*Leutnant* Ulbricht) was hit during the fighting; it tore off a return roller and cracked the hull. It was able to return with the other guns to Semljansk in the evening, however. Arrival there in the darkness.The Battery Commander announced a few promotions: *Unteroffizier* Kochan has become a *Wachtmeister* and *Obergefreiter* Krüger, *Obergefreiter* Prezler and *Gefreiter* Zimmermann have been promoted to *Unteroffizier*. Another three *Gefreiter* have been designated as *Obergefreiter*. In addition, there were several new *Gefreiter* and *Oberkanoniere*.

13 August 1942: The battery has been attached to the *287. Infanterie-Division* and assigned to support *Infanterie-Regiment 541*. Three guns (the "B" Gun has engine problems) moved out in the morning at 0245 hours to Kawerja. Initially, they waited at the outskirts of the village; later on, the guns occupied an ambush position on the northern outskirts. The battery did not fire. Russian tanks were observed at a distance of 4,500 meters. The night was spent in the ambush position.

14 August 1942: The guns were still in their old positions. A Russian tank advance from the east was turned back about noon. The "Z1" Gun took out a KV I and a T 34. The "A" Gun (*Oberwachtmeister* Madaus) was hit in the engine compartment. The gun caught fire, but the crew was able to dismount unscathed. It was not possible to extinguish the fire, however, and the gun flew into the air after about 15 minutes. A short while later, the "Z2" Gun arrived, so that 3 guns were back in action again. *Oberwachtmeister* Madaus climbed into the battery-officer gun. By evening, the battery had been alerted two more times, but nothing out of the ordinary happened any more.

15 August 1942: The combat elements in the ambush position. Heavy Russian artillery and tank fire there in the morning. In the process, the medic, *Gefreiter* Klewitz, was wounded by several pieces of shrapnel in the back and had to be taken to the hospital. Three alerts; three times the Russian tanks that had advanced to the edge of the village were driven back. Four tanks were damaged, however, they were able to pull back. In the evening, return to the strongpoint at the southwest outskirts of Kawerja. (The guns also returned there over the next few days, since good cover could be found in the narrow, but long defile.)

16 August 1942: Departure early in the morning to the old ambush position. *Leutnant* Loeck commanded the "Z2" Gun this time in place of *Leutnant* Ulbricht, who was sick. A surprise Russian tank attack occurred around 0900 hours. The "Z2" Gun eliminated a KV I and a T 34. When it moved back up front again after rearming, it received a direct hit from 800 meters, which penetrated the front slope, which had already been welded together once before. The driver, *Gefreiter* Subrink, was killed instantly. The gunner, *Gefreiter* Titus, was badly wounded on the forehead, the left upper arm and the right hand. The gun was moved back in the evening. The remaining two guns were directed to support the 2nd Battery for the afternoon. Attack to the northeast with the *II./Infanterie-Regiment 777* (*377. Infanterie-Division*) at 1400 hours; moving past Kawerja to the right. The old point of departure was to be taken back. The attack went well; it proceeded quite far without serious resistance. Later on, the battery-officer gun was hit; it damaged the left drive sprocket, a roadwheel and the left front shock absorber. It was disabled but was able to move under its own power back to the strongpoint. The "Z1" received shrapnel of no consequence in the exhaust stack. It returned to the strongpoint in the evening.

17 August 1942: The "Z1" Gun (with *Oberwachtmeister* Madaus as the gun commander), has been attached to the 2nd Battery today to help it screen the area that has been taken back. The day passed extremely quietly. Not a single round was fired. Return to the strongpoint at 1830 hours. Two long-barreled guns arrived for the battery at the trains in Semljansk during the course of the afternoon.

18 August 1942: Day of rest. Movement through Bol.-Treschtschewk to Semljansk at noon. Arrival there at 1430 hours. Departure for the *340. Infanterie-Division* with 5 guns at 1800 hours; arrival there at 1930 hours. (Route: Malo-Pereyka, Maloprokowka.) Spent the night in the village

19 August 1942: Departure of the combat elements at 0300 hours to Point 218.7. Screened with the *I./Infanterie-Regiment 695*. The day passed completely quietly. Only the rain was a disturbance. Return to the strongpoint, which is in a defile 2 kilometers to the south, at the onset of darkness.

20-22 August 1942: Combat elements at Point 218.7. Completely quiet; no rounds of ammunition expended.

23 August 1942: Screening conducted at the old position. Return to Semljansk at 1715 hours. Arrival there at 1915 hours.

24 August 1942: The battalion has been released from attachment to the *2. Armee*. It was to move immediately to the area north of Orel and the area of operations of the *2. Panzer-Armee*. Departure of the entire battery in the direction of Kurak in the morning at 0300 hours. Movement along *Rollbahn 12* through Kastarnoy to Krassnaja-Boljana (130 kilometers). Arrival there at 1800 hours.

25 August 1942: Continued to march in the morning at 0300 hours through Tschyri to Kursk. From Kursk, on to the north as far as Soboda. Arrival there at 1600 hours. March distance: 110 kilometers.

26 August 1942: Rail loading of the battery, along with elements of the Headquarters Battery, in Soboda in the morning at 0300 hours. Departure at 0900 hours to Orel. Arrival in Orel at 1430 hours, after a rail distance of 170 kilometers. Continued to march at 1530 hours to Bolchow. Quarters were established in the open at the onset of darkness 20 kilometers outside of the city.

27 August 1942: Continued through Bolchow and beyond early in the morning. Initially on *Rollbahn 65* and *Rollbahn 66* towards the north in the direction of Blisnowoskij, where we turned to the northwest through Gorjana. At noon, the battery arrived at its new quartering area on the edge of the woods 200 meters southeast of Gortschetnij. March distance for the day: 50 kilometers. Maintenance performed in the afternoon.

28 August 1942: The battery has been directed by the *LIII. Armee-Korps* to support the *26. Infanterie-Division*. In the morning, the combat elements (with 4 guns) and the combat trains moved to Mysin (via Blinow, Iwanowka, Ukolizy, Sorokino and Babinkowo). The ammunition vehicles and the combat trains remained there. The guns moved on to an assembly area 2.5 kilometers northeast of Mysin. In the evening, the 2nd Platoon, which was employed with the *I./Infanterie-Regiment 39*, had to undergo a difficult engagement with Russian tanks. In the end, though, the situation was mastered to our benefit after a long back-and-forth. The long-barreled gun of *Leutnant* Loeck was able to knock out 5 KV I's all by itself! *Unteroffizier* Flintrop was able to finish off a KV I and a light T 26 with his short barrel. Another KV I was battered so badly by him that it could no longer fire and was soon afterwards blown up by a *Feldwebel* from the antitank elements. The 1st Platoon, which was employed 1 kilometer to the southeast with *Kampfgruppe Weiler*, had no contact with the enemy and waited in vain. In the afternoon, it was successful, however, in knocking out a truck at great distance. When artillery landed, *Oberkanonier* Kunesch was wounded by shrapnel and had to be taken to the hospital.

29 August to 7 September 1942: Guns in an ambush position 2.5 kilometers northeast of Mysin. They waited in vain for Russian tanks. There was occasional heavy artillery fire and, even more pronounced, mortar fire. There was no damage to men or materiel, however. In the evening, the guns returned to the strongpoint on schedule so as to be able to move out again at first light. Although the "Z1" Gun appeared again on 29 August 1942, the battery-officer gun and the "B" Gun both became disabled on this day. Each day crews are changed out. Later on, when the guns appeared again, this measure was not changed. Only 3 guns go up front all the time. At the strongpoint proper, work was being done in a feverish manner to construct the bunkers. The bunker of the prime-mover crews — the "*Landser* Living Room" — drew attention to itself in an agreeable manner.

8-10 September 1942: Guns in the strongpoint. The situation is currently so quiet that the battery can confidently await things here.

11 September 1942: The battery was relieved by the 3rd Battery. The combat elements departed in the morning at 0500 hours for Bolchow (the combat trains departed yesterday). On the way, the trains linked up. Arrival at Bolchow at noon, where the former quarters of *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 202* are occupied.

12 September 1943: The battery started to get ready for the winter. Shelters were constructed for the vehicles.

13 September 1942: Formation for the entire battery. The Battery Commander handed out the ribbons for the East Medal. In all, 147 current and former members of the battery are eligible for the award. *Gefreiter* Bull, *Gefreiter* Koller, *Gefreiter* Lange, *Gefreiter* Lorenzen and *Gefreiter* Singelmann received the War Service Cross, 2nd Class, with Swords. In addition, several wound badges were awarded.

20 September 1942: Battery party in the quarters. It turned into quite the "drunk", since alcohol was available in huge quantities.

25 September 1942: The battery built new bunkers for the combat elements 20 kilometers northeast of Bolchow. The men were working like crazy. The sweat was flowing in spades. Everyone was dog tired in the evening, but the work moved along quickly.

30 September 1942: Suddenly and completely unexpectedly, the order to move out arrived. The construction of the bunkers was stopped immediately and the packing and loading started.

1 October 1942: Departure of the entire battery to Orel at 1600 hours. Arrival there in complete darkness. Group quarters were taken in the vicinity of the train station. *Unteroffizier* Wedler was promoted to *Wachtmeister*, effective immediately.

2 October 1942: Battery in Orel.

3 October 1942: Rail loading at 0600 hours with elements of the Headquarters Battery. Departure in the direction of Brjansk at 1030 hours. Arrival there in the evening.

4 October 1942: Battery in Rosslawl in the morning. In Smolensk (East) in the afternoon. Continued to move in the evening.

5 October 1942: Battery in Spass-Demensk in the morning at 0400 hours. Continued to move to Lomakino at 0630 hours (12 kilometers east of Spass-Demensk). Private quarters were taken. The construction of shelters for the vehicles was started immediately. The battery has been designated as the field-army reserve of the *4. Armee*. It would set itself up in a comfortable fashion in the weeks that followed for the coming winter. Among other things, a bath point was constructed.

12 October 1942: *Leutnant* Ulbricht was promoted to *Oberleutnant*, with an effective date of 1 September 1942.

15 October 1942: *Stabswachtmeister* Junker was detailed to the *Wehrmacht* College in Stettin for taking Final Examination I. The battery received another gun from *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 202*.

14 October to 1 November 1942: Half of the battery has been consolidated with elements of the other batteries to form a "fortifications detail". Infantry positions were constructed at Nowoje-Askerowo, 5 kilometers east of Miljatinski. Terrific work was accomplished despite the worst of conditions and weather on several occasions. On 2 November 1942, the detail was suddenly called back, since the battalion was supposed to move elsewhere again.

1 November 1942: *Oberwachtmeister* Fechtner was promoted to *Leutnant*, effective 1 October 1942. *Oberwachtmeister* Madaus was appointed *Hauptwachtmeister*.

2 November 1942: A portion of the combat elements moved to the new quartering area during the afternoon (12 kilometers east of Spass-Demensk, in the vicinity of the *Rollbahn*.)

3 November 1942: The remaining portions of the combat elements followed in the morning. Private quarters were initially occupied in the village, with work proceeding feverishly in constructing barracks and shelters. The *Organization Todt* had already framed them in. After three days of work, the combat elements were able to occupy their new quarters.

10 November 9142: The trains were also moved to Utrikowa. Work continued to be done on the barracks and shelters over the next few weeks. Clean and comfortable quarters were established, which had lights and radios. Since the winter had not been so severe up to this point, life was tolerable here. Especially since the battery had sufficient winter clothing.

12 November 1942: *Wachtmeister* Schrödel was transferred to Schweinfurt and the replacement elements for the purpose of standing up a new formation.

24 November 1942: *Stabswachtmeister* Junker returned to the battery.

25 November 1942: The battalion has been in existence two years today. During formation, a short order-of-the-day from the Battalion Commander concerning the anniversary was read aloud. *Leutnant* Loeck hit the highpoints of the event-filled history of the battery in a short address.

30 November 1942: *Unteroffizier* Zimmermann was transferred to the branch school at Schweinfurt for the purpose of attending an officer-candidate course. *Unteroffizier* Biedermann was transferred to the medical replacement battalion at Bad Kissingen to complete his military medical studies. The battalion formed a so-called "hunt detail" [*Jagdkommando*] for engaging the partisans in the winter. The battery provided a squad that is completely mobile under winter conditions: 1 officer and 8 enlisted personnel, who are magnificently equipped with, among other things, a light machine gun, 2 submachine guns and skis. The training conducted by *Leutnant* Kretschmer was extremely varied and thorough. It lasted several weeks.

2 December 1942: *Feldwebel* Richter was transferred to the battery.

14 December 1942: A noncommissioned officer course is being conducted by the battalion in Utrikowa. Seven men from the 1st Battery are participating. *Oberleutnant* Ulbricht is in charge of the course.

17 December 1942: The combat elements were alerted in the morning. It was intended to employ the four short-barreled guns in engagements against partisans in the Rosslawl area. The preparations to move out were made immediately. The order was rescinded in the afternoon. Now, however, the entire battalion was supposed to be ready to move out. Things were packed and loaded in a feverish manner. By evening, it had been done. Apparently, the battalion is supposed to be moved to Welkije (west of Toropez) and into the area of operations of the *9. Armee*. It is to be employed there to assist in relieving a [surrounded] *Kampfgruppe*. It was also said the *Führer* himself has reserved the right to make the final decision concerning the movement of the battalion. If necessary, the battery was to be prepared to load by rail as early as tomorrow morning in Tschipljajewo.

18 December 1942: The decision still has not been reached. It was not found out until late in the evening that the battalion will not be transferred to the *9 Armee*. It might be going to the Italian field army on the Don, however.

19 December 1942: The battalion will remain with the *4. Armee*, since the reorganization of the 2nd battery has not yet been completed. In our place, *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 209* is moving to the Don.

21 December 1942: The vehicles were unloaded. Landline, light and radio lines were set up again. Everyone is peeved about the continuous loading and unloading. On the other hand, everyone is now happy to be able to spend a quiet Christmas in proper quarters.

23 December 1942: At noon it was announced that the battalion will move to Germany and be reorganized as a "heavy battalion" there. The old vehicles will be turned over to *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 270*, which is in the process of being activated. The happiness with which this news was received is indescribable. It should be noted, however, that no one believes it completely just yet.

24-27 December 1942: The battery celebrated a quiet Christmas. During the afternoon of Christmas Eve, there was a "Christmas reading", followed by a celebration out in the open. Using this opportunity, the Battery Commander announced a number of promotions. Effective 1 December 1942, the following have been promoted: *Unteroffizier* Flintrop is now a *Wachtmeister*; *Obergefreiter* Pries, *Gefreiter* Golinski and *Gefreiter* Hamann are *Unteroffiziere*. In addition, we now have (our first!) *Stabsgefreiter*, 10 new *Obergefreiter* and 21 new *Gefreiter*. *Obergefreiter* Krieg, *Gefreiter* Blender and *Gefreiter* Evers received the War Service Cross, 2nd Class, with Swords. There was general celebrating in the quarters in the evening. Because there were large quantities of alcohol available, everyone could quaff to his heart's content. The binging lasted until the morning… There was no training schedule for Christmas Day. On the 2nd and 3rd days of Christmas — the latter a Sunday — very little was done. The days were spent in a cozy atmosphere in the quarters. Occasionally, there was even a real hint of Christmas spirit. Especially when everyone was sitting around a Christmas tree and the candles were giving off a glow. Both from home and from the military there was sufficient items for both the stomach and for smoking, chocolate and bonbons, so that no

one could complain in that respect. Otherwise, the soldiers read, wrote, played chess or cards. A few even formed a group for skiing in the woods.

28 December 1942: An advance party of 10 men under *Stabswachtmeister* Junker went to Germany along with all of the 3rd Battery. It does look like the movement and the reorganization will actually take place!

1 January 1943: The battery experienced an exceptionally quiet New Year's. It is now preparing itself for its departure to Germany. The soldiers are longing for the day of departure.

3-9 January 1943: The battery conducted a "Poison gas Week", so that all of the men could be prepared in the event of a poison-gas attack. Theoretical instruction was coupled with marches and exercising wearing a gas mask. The Poison-Gas Detection Team used a special exercise to demonstrate identifying and rendering mustard gas ineffective.

8 January 1943: So that the new *3./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 270* got an idea of how assault guns work together with infantry, the battery made a platoon of infantry available to conduct an exercise with the combat elements of the [other battery]. The exercise was conducted from 0700-1000 hours in the area around Ipot-Wyssokoje.

11 January 1943: After the battery had already provided a gun crew (commanded by *Unteroffizier* Schlabs) at New Year's to demonstrate how to engage armored vehicles with handheld weapons, the demonstration of how to effectively engage armored vehicles with handheld weapons was also shown in Utrikowa. Combat engineers had one of our guns roll over them in fox holes they had dug themselves, so as to then "dispatch" the armored vehicle witch a satchel charge.

12 January 1943: The entire battery allowed itself to be overrun by one of our guns, so that each and everyone could help get rid of the peculiar dread that one has of enemy tanks.

14 January 1943: The Battery Commander was able to award seven current and one former member of the battalion with the General Assault Badge.

19 January 1943: The force relieving us, *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 270*, has arrived in Spass-Demensk. This same afternoon, a portion of the battery equipment could be turned over.

20 January 1943: What remained of the battery equipment was turned over this morning. The battery itself made its final preparations for its departure. At 1400 hours, a formation for the entire battalion was held with the Battalion Commander. *Major* Steinwachs spoke to the men for a short while. He elaborated on how a new chapter was starting for the battalion. Even though we could be quite proud of our accomplishments in Russia, we were still obligated to continue to give it our all. Just the fact alone that we would become the first heavy battalion in existence needed to spur us on to always do our duty. Following that, we started the trip to Spass-Demensk in the trucks that were waiting for us. By the time an hour had passed, we were all loaded up in the rail cars. There were four cars for the battery. Although the space was somewhat cramped, it got comfortable over time, since there was enough straw and a decent oven. The battery spent the night in the rail cars, even though the departure was not set until the next morning.

21 January 1943: Departure at 0730 hours in Spass-Demensk. The train was in Smolensk (East) in the evening at 1830 hours. There was food there and hot coffee.

22 January 1943: Departure from Smolensk (East) at 0100 hours; departed the Smolensk main station at 0200 hours. Orscha was reached at 0730 hours. There were a number of creature comforts there: *Schnaps*, cigarettes and, in the afternoon, even a visit to the movies!

23 January 1943: The movement continued shortly after midnight. The train reached Berisow at 0820 hours. The movement (to Minsk) did not continue again until 1750 hours; Minsk was reached at 2300 hours.

24 January 1943: This day brought a few small, pleasant surprises: For one thing, we made good progress during the day. In addition, there was *Schnaps* in huge quantities. You really had to hand it to the movement officer, *Oberleutnant* Ulbricht. He took extraordinary efforts to make life comfortable for us. We were able to get coffee and soup at every larger station. It should also be noted that the Battery Commander was traveling ahead of us ever since Smolensk. Stolboy was reached at 0910 hours, Baranowitschi at 1145 hours and Wolkowisk at 2100 hours. Everyone hoped to be in Jüterbog in two days.

25 January 1943: Disappointingly, the train only proceeded a short stretch. To counter that, *Oberleutnant* Ulbricht once again arranged for something very nice! The first beer in a long time was drunk at Czeremch. The afternoon was then idled away at several smaller stations.

26 January 1943: During the night, at 0100 hours, we arrived at Siedlce. After a stop of more than 2 and one-half hours, the trains rolled on again, only to stop again at several smaller train stations. It was not until 1230 hours that Praga, a suburb of Warsaw, was reached. The train only halted for 15 minutes there. We did not get to see the actual city of Warsaw. We stopped at a small train station 30 kilometers outside of Warsaw. Once again there was opportunity to drink beer…

27 January 1943: During the night, the border between the General Government and the province of East Prussia was crossed. Later, the movement continued further to the west into the district of Danzig-West Prussia. Early in the morning, the first German town, Gosslarshausen, was gazed upon in amazement. Graudenz was reached at 1000 hours, and Bromberg at 1900 hours.

28 January 1943: The train arrived in Schneidemühl around 0330 hours. Unfortunately, there were delays over and over again. The train was shifted from one track to another, until the movement was continued at 1830 hours.

29 January 1943: The train arrived in Lichterfelde at 0430 hours, but it did not pull out again until 0745 hours. We then moved across the southern ring of the capital of the *Reich* to the freight station at Tempelhof, which was reached at 0800 hours. Once again, we had to wait. The hours we were halted were used to wash, shave, etc. Everyone was eager to get to Jüterbog. The race to the end was started at 1330 hours. At an extremely fast tempo, the train proceeded to Jüterbog, moving through Teltow and Luckenwalde. Jüterbog was reached at 1715 hours. The trucks were also there soon; they picked up our baggage. The company itself marched through dark Jüterbog to the New Camp. The quarters were a pleasant surprise, since the barracks were new construction. Clean, with electric lights and running water. That same evening, the Battery Commander had the battery form up. He made the cheerful announcement that almost without exception everyone would be able to take leave for three weeks.

30 January 1943: After being deloused by means of an extremely pleasant shower in the morning, everybody got ready for leave. Before that happened, the battery was also presented with another pleasant surprise. *Hauptmann* Brinke, the first commander of the battery, paid a visit. It was during this occasion that it was announced that he had been awarded the German Cross in Gold. There was still yet another pleasant surprise this day! The Battery Commander was able to award the long awaited Crimea Campaign Badges [*Krimschild*]. Immediately after the badges had been handed out, the members of the battery started their leave. [End of entries for the *1./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197*]

Battalion Commanders

25 November 1940 to 9 September 1941:
Major Helmut Christ

9 September to October 1941
Hauptmann Kurt von Barisani

1 November to December 1941
Hauptmann Heinz Steinwachs

December 1941
Major Helmut Christ

January 1942 to 1 April 1943
Major Heinz Steinwachs.

After-Action Report Concerning the Engagement of Soviet Tanks on 24 April 1942

Headquarters, Heeresgruppe Süd
April 1942
Deputy Chief-of-Staff for Operations, No. 2644 / 42,

Headquarters, 24

SECRET
SUBJECT: Lessons Learned Concerning the Engagement of Russian Tanks

TO: German Army High Command, General Staff of the Army, Training Directorate Attached is an after-action report from Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197 (11. Armee) for evaluation, especially for troop elements that have newly arrived in the East and have no combat experience. The lessons learned were gathered during the successful defensive fighting of the 11. Armee on the Kerch Peninsula.

FOR THE FIELD-ARMY GROUP COMMANDER
The Chief of Staff

Signed for by
Deputy Chief-of-Staff for Operations
/signed/

Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197
2 April 1942
Battalion Operations Officer, No. 216/42 SECRET

Battalion Command Post,

After-Action Report Concerning the Engagement of Russian Tanks during the Battalion's Operations on the Kerch Peninsula in March 1942

The battalion was employed with its two operational batteries at the beginning of March 1942 in the area of operations of the *XXXXII. Armee-Korps* along the corps' defensive front. It contributed significantly to the successful defensive operations against the heavy employment of medium, heavy and super-heavy tanks in attacks conducted by the Russians from 13 to 16 March and on 19 March 1942. In the course of these operations it knocked out 70 tanks. This was in addition to engaging infantry attacks, antitank guns etc. The main lessons learned during these operations — the battalion was employed for the first time in defensive operations against these types of massed tanks attacks — are as follows:

1.) Employment of assault guns in an antitank role
As a decidedly offensive weapon, assault guns should generally be held back in the defense and be employed when the enemy penetrates into the main line of resistance in the conduct of immediate and deliberate counterattacks. It was demonstrated here that with the small forces available at the time in terms of our own infantry and the considerable numerical superiority in terms of the enemy's employment of tanks, infantry and artillery when conducting a successful penetration into the main line of resistance, that an immediate counterattack, even with assault guns, generally did not succeed. Therefore, the assault guns were staged directly in or behind the main line of resistance in the smallest unit possible, a platoon of three guns. They had the mission of preventing every penetration into the main line of resistance of enemy tanks and, even more so, of the following enemy infantry.

2.) Preparations for Operations
Selection of an assembly area that is as covered and concealed as possible, based on the terrain, and the most likely avenue of attack, based on approach routes and attack directions for the enemy tanks. As detailed coordination as possible with the friendly infantry. Best fields of observation either right near the assembly area or within in. Exploitation of all options for cover and concealment for the assault guns; if possible, dig positions. (A knocked-out Russian tank gave an assault gun the best-possible cover for days on end.)Determine an approach route that is as covered and concealed as possible for the rearming during the day, bringing up reinforcements etc.

3.) Employment of a Platoon
The platoons moved each day before first light into the staging areas behind the main line of resistance and were pulled back at the onset of darkness. When moving in or out, there was no effective disruption or loss of vehicles due to engagement by the enemy. The attempt to screen against tanks at night with assault guns is pointless.Deploying the platoon by using every possible opportunity for cover and concealment: leader's vehicle as far forward as possible; both of the other two guns dispersed laterally (200-300 meters) and echeloned to the rear. Constant seamless observation of the enemy terrain for movement of the enemy, especially with armored vehicles, and paying attention to engine sounds.

4. Fighting
The platoon leader has to bring his platoon into the flank of the approaching and identified enemy armored attack — orders transmitted by radio — and without any regard for his own open flank. The likelihood of hitting the enemy is greater and he is more vulnerable [from the side] than from the front. Of critical importance is the moment of surprise when attacked from the flank; to this end, movements to deceive the enemy are conducted by individual assault guns. Both of these are abetted by the limited visibility from the [buttoned-up] Russian tanks. This tactic is made easier by the fact that the Russian tanks in the attack almost always attack from the side or at least at an acute angle to the main line of resistance — in keeping with their intentions of breaking through — which then allows the distribution of targets for most of the guns to be determined by the individual guns themselves. Opening fire by the platoon all at once on command of the platoon leader in the case of a massed attack at about 800-1000 meters. In that case, firing must be quick and accurate. Usually, a T 34 was only able to fire one round with less accuracy in response to 3-4 rounds of an assault gun. The practice of rapid and frequent changes of positions while using artificial smoke has paid off when the assault guns are being engaged, especially by T 34's and very heavy Russian tanks. If possible, another assault gun of the platoon immediately takes up the engagement of the attacker [while the other gun or guns change position]. By doing this, the battalion was able to make it through the difficult days of defense with only a single total loss as the result of enemy tank engagement. This gun could no longer be evacuated; instead, it had to be blown up, because friendly infantry pulled back.

5.) Actions of Friendly Infantry
The prerequisite for the success of the defensive engagement of assault guns is that the friendly infantry remains in the main line of resistance in all situations, even if a few Russian tanks have broken through. It was only during the first few attacks that the Russian infantry accompanied their tanks; they had very heavy casualties (in large part due to ricochet fire by the assault guns). Later on, the tanks advanced on their own. If the Russian infantry noticed, however, that the friendly infantry was pulling back, then it immediately advanced, established itself in the main line of resistance, and the [German] immediate counterattack, as has already been mentioned, was casualty intensive and usually without success. During the last few engagements, the knocking out of so many tanks, some of which had broken through, led to the infantry behaving in this proper and successful manner.

6.) Fire control and ammunition.
In the case of massed tank attacks, fire had to be opened at distances greater than 600 meters; there were also a considerable number of vehicles knocked out at even greater distances. In some instances, the Russian tanks stopped at 1000-1200 meters and opened fire. In that instance, it was impossible for the assault guns to be brought to a closer distance in the almost completely open terrain. Apart from that, the assault

guns were also not able to move beyond the main line of resistance due to friendly mines and/or the final-protective fires of friendly artillery. When engaging medium Russian tanks, 100% destruction was assured at any distance with impact fuses, sometimes with delay.In the case of T 34's, they were ranged in with impact fuses and then at distances of up to 600 meters, in some cases up to 800 meters, the fire for effect was conducted with the Model 38 antitank round. Effectiveness: Complete disintegration of the entire running gear; complete destruction of the interior fittings; elimination of the entire crew; in most cases, immediate catching on fire. If T 34's had to be engaged at greater distances, the ranging fire was conducted with impact fuses or antitank rounds and the fire-for-effect with alternating impact fuses, impact fuses with delay and antitank rounds. Even when using this method of engagement, a large number of vehicles were knocked out. If there were hits but no effect was noted, then the engagement was immediately called off and it was waited until the tanks came nearer. When engaging a 52-ton tank, which had engaged an assault gun from a range of 1200 meters, damage was noted but the tank was not disabled. Ammunition consumption was quite high, which was to be expected; after all, in addition to armored vehicles, enemy infantry, antitank guns and artillery had to be engaged. As a result, sufficient ammunition was pre-positioned in the assembly area in addition to the 100 rounds carried in each gun. The guns were rearmed after the [enemy] attack had been turned back. The last remaining armored ammunition carrier of the battalion was always on the go to get more supplies.

7. Summary
Even a massed enemy armor attack can be turned back, in most cases by a single assault-gun platoon when led in a professional, imaginative manner and with sufficient ammunition reserves. Of critical importance: Surprising the enemy; flanking attacks; opening fire all at once; quick, precise firing. Whoever is at an effective range and opens fire first will win. The platoon, the platoon leader and the crews have to be impeccably trained and functioning as a team. Then, if they do not let the large numerical superiority of the Russian tanks unsettle them and they maintain their self-confidence, success will be with them.

/signed/ Steinwachs *Major* and Battalion Commander

After-Action Report: Operations of the Battalion on the Kerch Peninsula from 8-22 May 1942 and Against Sevastopol from 7 June to 1 July 1942

Copy

SECRET

Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197
9 July 1942

Location classified,

Battalion Operations Officer
After-Action Report

Operations of the Battalion on the Kerch Peninsula from 8-22 May 1942 and against Sevastopol from 7 June to 1 July 1942

As a supplement to the reports of 2 and 8 April 1942, as well as the report concerning the Model 39 antitank round (31 May 1942), the following lessons learned appear important:

1.) Tactical lessons learned on the Kerch Peninsula
2.) Tactical lessons learned outside of Sevastopol
3.) Antitank defense
4.) Ammunition
5.) Demolitions
6.) Communications

1.) Tactical lessons learned on the Kerch Peninsula
Before the attack started, numerous rehearsals and extensive discussions concerning the conduct of the attack were held with the infantry and the engineers. Above all, it was important to determine how to overcome the different minefields and wire obstacles, as well as the Parpatsch Ditch, in conjunction with the engineers. For this task, each battery had an engineer platoon with special equipment in support. Equipment of the engineers: 3 light machine guns; 1 antitank rifle; 4 Molotov cocktails; smoke pots; satchel charges; mine detectors; digging tools; Bangalore torpedoes; as well as sufficient demolitions and blasting devices, fascines and assault ladders. A portion of the equipment was loaded on the low sleds that had been built by the engineers. These were attached to the armored ammunition carriers. Lanes through friendly minefields were created the night before and marked; in addition, they were manned by guides. The gaps in the enemy wire obstacles, which had already been partially destroyed by friendly artillery, were widened by means of Bangalore torpedoes. The lanes thus created by the engineers, when they removed any remnants of the wire, were at least 5 meters wide. Enemy minefields were discovered by engineer mine-searching teams, who were with the leading infantry elements and worked their way up to and through the minefields in front of the assault guns. The engineer mine-searching teams had to immediately stop the assault gun by

hand and arm signals when they identified the forward edge of a minefield. The engineer mine-clearing parties then created lanes for the assault guns while the assault guns, artillery and infantry heavy weapons provided covering fire and, if needed, artificial smoke. The assault guns were then guided through the lanes with guides. After crossing the minefields, the assault guns dispersed laterally.Training the combat elements by mine specialists from the engineers on the types of enemy mines, their clearing etc paid dividends. The main difficulty here was recognizing the limits of our own forward-most lines.

Tank ditches

The assault guns overwatched the clearing of the mines at and in the tank ditch as well as the setting up of the demolition charge for blowing up and leveling the walls of the ditch. After the demolitions had taken place, the assault guns passed through the passage points, guided by the hand-and-arm signals of the engineers. In some instances, the crossing points the enemy had created for the ditch fell into our hands unscathed. After crossing the tank ditch, the assault guns established contact with the attacking infantry as soon as possible. The individual engineer platoons that had been in support were released for other missions. The coordination with the infantry and the engineers was excellent. Despite extremely dense mining and stiff enemy resistance (artillery, antitank guns, mortars, antitank rifles and snipers), the Parpatsch Ditch was crossed by noon on the first day. By order of the Army High Command, the battalion evaluated its lessons learned in the training film "Assault Guns and Combat Engineers". The continued course of the attack bore out the correctness of the fundamentals that had been taught heretofore: physical integrity of the assault guns; formation of a point of main effort; platoons with three guns; operational freedom during operations through constant, close personal contact with the infantry; terrain and leader's reconnaissance in the forward-most lines by the battalion commander.

2.) Tactical lessons learned outside of Sevastopol

The attack led through terrain that was already familiar to the battalion as a result of the attack in December 1941: The Kamyschly Defile and the area to the southwest. It was now considerably more difficult for the infantry and, above all, the assault guns. As a result of the greening of the vegetation, which was as tall as a man in most instances, the terrain had become extremely broken. The enemy had considerably reinforced his positions in the meantime by means of innumerable new field fortifications with narrow and usually very deep trenches and excellently camouflaged earth bunkers that barely jutted above the ground. In addition, there were expanded minefields that had often been laid in an irregular pattern. The line of sight was often only a few meters. Mines, steep slopes and narrow defiles restricted the maneuverability of the assault guns. Operations without direct infantry support, let alone in front of it, were impossible and forbidden. Despite this, the assault guns were penetrated on the sides at extremely short range by antitank riflemen who could not be identified and [also disabled by] Molotov cocktails. Never before in a combat sector had the lack of a close-in defensive weapon on the assault gun proven to be so disadvantageous. Therefore, we are recommending a built-in machine gun and, if possible, even a flamethrower. Likewise disadvantageous was the Model 38 round, which, due to the lack of a delay setting, prematurely burst at extremely short range, thus considerably endangering the friendly infantry while at the same time not being able to do anything against the earth bunkers in the vegetation. It was actually irresponsible to employ the assault guns under these circumstances. Despite everything, the enormous difficulties were overcome through a constant review of the somewhat limited operational options. In many instances, fire support was achieved by the assault guns from an elevated firing position that provided fields of observation and fire to a limited extent. If possible, this was done from the flank until the attack objective had been reached. The main difficulty here was identifying the limit of advance of the friendly forces. In order to provide indispensable fire support for the attack that had bogged down on the western slope of the massif at Gajtani and in front of the Tschornaja, the assault guns were led through the railway tunnel east of Makansiewy-Gory, since they were not able to get over the steep slopes otherwise. Good success was achieved in house-to-house fighting by coupling 1 to 2 assault guns with 2 self-propelled *Flak*, which eliminated enemy fires from the rooftops and buildings [while moving] behind the guns.

3.) Antitank defense

On the Kerch Peninsula and, above all, outside of Sevastopol, enemy tanks only appeared in front of the battalion in small groups. Fifty were knocked out. Lessons learned were similar to the ones during the defensive fighting on the Kerch Peninsula in March 1942.

4.) Ammunition: Model 38 7.5-centimeter round for the main gun with Model 38 Impact Fuse.

The number of duds or ricocheted rounds was considerably less in the usually stony ground, especially on the slopes. The effect against light positions in the cliffs was adequate. The very sensitive igniter resulted in premature detonations by the slightest contact with branches. Earth bunkers behind vegetation could not be touched; friendly infantry would have been endangered. Success was achieved against forces in trenches by intentionally causing premature detonations in the overhanging vegetation. The lessons learned incorporated in the report of 31 May 1942 (No. 272/42 SECRET), have been confirmed again by and large. The Model 38 round is completely unsuited for use in assault guns as the only type of round. It should also be mentioned that the battalion has already had its second burst barrel as a result of the Model 38 round.

5.) Demolitions and crew destruction of the vehicle
A total loss was sustained as the result of an explosion that occurred when an aircraft tracer round went through the hatch and ignited the demolition charge, which was stored separately from the igniters, as per regulations. The demolitions charges need to be carried in containers that offer protection against rounds, if they are not to be dispensed with entirely. An immobilized assault gun can always be made unusable [to the enemy] by means of fuel and hand grenades or the rounds of another assault gun.

6. Communications
Both operations had proven the unconditional necessity of a rigidly disciplined, tactically properly based radio communications system and, with it, the necessity of the issuance in the near future of a radio vehicle, which has been lost and repeatedly requested by the battalion. The successful analysis of conferences with infantry commanders, enemy situation reports, terrain reconnaissance etc as measured by the immediate commitment of assault guns by the Battalion Commander turned out magnificently.

/signed/ Steinwachs
Hauptmann and Battalion Commander

Paybook Entries for Operations and Engagements of the Battalion from 9 April 1941 to 12 June 1943

9 April 1941	Breakthrough through the Yugoslavian frontier defenses.
10-12 April 1941	Fighting to take Agram and Belgrade
13-18 April 1941	Capture of Belgrade; pursuit towards Sarajevo
18-22 April 1941	Securing the former Yugoslavia area
	Operations in the Soviet Union
22 June to 12 July 1941	Fighting along the frontier in Bessarabia, Galicia and Wolhynia
22-28 June 1941	Fighting along the frontier between the Bug and Styr.
23 June to 12 July 1941	Fighting between the Styr and the Stalin Line.
25 June to 4 July 1941	Advance across the Horyn in the direction of the Stalin Line
2-25 July 1941	Breakthrough in the direction of Kiev and advance to the Dnjepr
2-25 July 1941	Breakthrough through the Stalin Line
8-16 July 1941	Battle at Cudno-Berditschew
11-24 July 1942	Guard missions outside of Kiev
14-24 July 1941	Fighting in the area north of Shitomir. Pursuit towards the Dnjepr and attacks across the Dnjepr
26 July to 29 August 1941	Pursuit up to the Dnjepr
31 Aug to 12 Sep 1941	Attack across the Dnjepr
13 Sep to 5 Oct 1941	Pursuit through Poltawa
21 Aug to 27 Sep 1941	Battle at Kiev
1-10 October 1941	Pursuit toward the Donez
1-10 October 1941	Engagements during the pursuit along the Psiol and the Worskla
17-25 October 1941	Fighting at Kharkov and Belgorod
26 Oct to 16 Nov 1941	Employment in the area of operations
	Fighting on the Crimea
17 Nov to 16 Dec 1941	Screening on the Crimea
17-31 December 1941	Attack on Sevastopol
1-18 January 1942	Fighting around and northwest of Feodosia
19 Jan to 7 May 1942	Defensive fighting along the Parpatsch Position
8-21 May 1942	Battle on the Kerch Peninsula and capture of Kerch
22 May to 1 June 1942	Screening on the Crimea
2 June to 4 July 1942	Attack on and capture of the fortress of Sevastopol
5-31 July 1942	Screening on the Crimea

1942	Offensive in the East
1-25 August 1942	Defensive battles at Woronesch
	Positional warfare in the area of operations of Heeresgruppe Mitte:
26 August 1942 to 21 January 1943	
26 Aug to 12 Sep 1942	Offensive and defensive operations in the area south of Belew - Koselsk - Szuchinitschi
13 Sep 1942 to 20 Jan 1943	Employment in the area of operations
21 Jan to 12 June 1943	Employment in the homeland

Activation Orders for Light and Heavy Assault-Gun Battalions (15 January 1943)

15 January 1943 Army High Command / Force Structure Order

SUBJECT: Establishment of Light and Heavy Assault-Gun Battalions
Based on new directives received from the General Staff of the Army (dated 23 December 1942), the orders issued on 21 October and 22 October 1942 for the establishment of light and heavy assault-gun battalions have become superfluousThey are therefore rescinded and replaced by the new order that follows. The following [formations] are to be established by *Wehrkreis III* at Artillery School II:
a) With a reporting date of 15 March 1943: *leichte Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 911*
b) With a reporting date of 31 March 1943: *schwere Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197*
c) With a reporting date of 1 April 1943: *leichte Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 912*
d) With a reporting date of 30 April 1943: *schwere Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung* (numerical designation will be provided separately)
e) With a reporting date of 31 May 1943: *schwere Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung* (numerical designation will be provided separately)
Heavy Assault-Gun Battalion

Headquarters	TO&E 416b (31 January 1943)
Headquarters Battery	TO&E 588b (31 January 1943)
1st-3rd Batteries	TO&E 446b (31 January 1943) (with Assault Gun 43/1)
Maintenance Battery	TO&E 598 (31 January 1943)

The establishment of the heavy assault-gun battalions are to be set up in such a manner that individual batteries can be reported as being ready for field deployment immediately after receipt of the first *Pz.Kpfw. "Tigers"* from production (as early as February 1943 possible).

First-Hand Accounts by Former Members of the Battalion

The first few months of operations of StuG.Abt. 197 in the Soviet Union are covered by the diary of a former member of the *1.*/StuG.Abt. 197, *Unteroffizier* Heinrich Skodell:

My Diary Concerning the Campaign Against Russia

Sunday, 22 June 1941. Morning, 0300 hours. We were 200 meters in front of the Bug, across from Sokal. The first German gun barked at 0315 hours, then hundreds more joined in. In the blink of an eye, Sokal was in flames; it was all Hell over there. The sappers had the bridge in our hands.Then the assault artillery was called forward. We crossed the Bug at 0350 hours. We moved through the streets of Sokal and looked for the enemy. At the first corner, there was a German soldier, the first dead man. We reached the bunkers 10 minutes later; the fighting started. I was in the platoon leader's vehicle with my platoon leader, a young *Leutnant*. We had to take a detour, because we could not get through the tank ditches. Suddenly, we were attacked in a defile by Russians; a short firefight. A brickworks went up in flames, and the Russians have given themselves a black eye running up against our gun. 0600 hours: The line of bunkers was penetrated. I dismounted, took my radio equipment and went forward. We had to fight our way through the fields. Bullets were whistling and rounds impacted in our direction. A few soldiers were hit, and the medics ran from one wounded man to another, stained in blood. House-to-house fighting flared up in Horbkons, but the resistance was soon broken. We went on to Tartakow. We occupied an assembly area there. The city was under heavy enemy artillery fire. We had to move forward twice late in the afternoon; in the process, we captured an enemy battery, two tanks and an antitank gun. *Gefreiter* Smolka, a motorcycle messenger from my platoon, was wounded (shot in the arm). We spent the night in Tartakow.

23 June 1941: Awakened by our own artillery fire. Pursued the Russians. Patrol operation with tanks, in the process of which an enemy battery was engaged and forced to take flight. A column of infantry was eliminated. East of Parwiatycze, our Platoon Leader, *Leutnant* Ulbricht, was wounded. *Leutnant* Wagner took over the platoon. Served as advance guard during the afternoon. Fighting in the village of Cechow; 2 mortars and their prime movers captured. *Gefreiter* Eberle wounded.

24 June 1941: Pursuit; fighting in the village of Zwiniacze; continued on to Baremel. Jewish business had a sale for us; no need to pay. It was very hot.

25 June 1941: Baremel, 0300 hours; Russian offensive expected. We went up front; the Russians have already evacuated the area. We had to cross the Styr. The bridge had been blown up. We went to the south through Sipa. We wanted to cross there, but the bridge was very bad. We had to build one.

26 June 1941: Morning, 0200 hours; the bridge was finished. We marched through Perenyi, Beretecz, across the Styr, Werben and Chryniki (severe air attack with many dead among the infantry) to Melnio. The objective of the day was reached. Patrol west of Dubno in the afternoon. 20 dead Russians; among them were the first Mongolians. *Leutnant* Wollermann killed. *Leutnant* Spielmann wounded.

27 June 1941: We slept well on straw during the night. The weather is very warm. Thorough cleaning. *Leutnant* Wollermann was buried. Looked at the GPU prison at Dubno. Harrowing experience.

28 June 1941: Departure at 0400 hours to Melnio. Russian attack on Sitno at 1800 hours. Attack turned back. 40 tanks and 70 trucks destroyed and two batteries silenced. Many dead Russians; a terrible thing to see. *Gefreiter* Stammen wounded. One gun disabled by a direct hit; had to be repaired. One 52-ton tank blown up.

29 June 1941: Attack at 0900 hours. We moved ahead of the infantry through the ruins of the Red Army. Move cross-country; suddenly, a firefight. Three Russians who were defending desperately in a grain field. One Russian was crushed by an assault gun; the other two were killed by gunfire. We spent the night in Kruki.

30 June 1941: Nice weather. Enemy fighter made an emergency landing near Kruki. The pilot vanished. Departure at 1700 hours through Poczajow-Nonvy. Spent the night in Taraz.

1 July 1941: Crossed the Nawa. Attacked cross-country. Suddenly, three Russian tanks; we only had one gun. Short exchange of fire. One enemy tank destroyed; the fleeing officer was killed by gunfire. The two other tanks fled. Rested 3 kilometers north of Wieniaviec. Two enemy air attacks, but no damage. Beer received; time to call it a day!

2 July 1941: Morning, 0600 hours. The infantry has been fighting the Russians since 1 July 1941 in their desperate attempt to break out at Katrynburg. Our 2nd Platoon was supposed to help out the battery, which has also been there since 1 July. We moved cross-country. Just outside of a village, a tank was destroyed. We then entered the village with sappers. The fighting against the superior numbers of Russians lasted many hours. They attacked over and over again. The fighting was decided in the afternoon. The Reds have abandoned the field after taking huge losses. A few prisoners were taken; they were Stalin's elite, who fought to the last man. Both of the guns of the 2nd Platoon became disabled and had to be repaired.

3 July 1941: It rained during the night. We were in some woods near Horynka, 10 kilometers north of Wisniowic. Day of rest. The weather has been temperamental.

4 July 1941: It rained the entire night and up until 1500 hours in the afternoon. During the morning, we moved all of the vehicles out of the woods and onto the road. It was a lot of work, since the ground had softened up. We moved as far as Wierzoaviec with the combat elements. The trains had to remain in Wisniowic, because the unimproved roads could not be driven upon as a result of the rain.

5 July 1941: Rations had to be fetched with tracked vehicles. Every other vehicle got stuck in the muck. On the way [to get rations] you saw innumerable vehicles that were bogged down in the mud. The weather has improved somewhat; it is starting to dry out. The horsedrawn units and the dismounted elements have a great deal of difficulty advancing in this muck. Rations will undoubtedly not be available for a few days,

since those of us in the combat elements are getting further and further away from the trains, and the trains cannot follow.

6 July 1941: It was very cool and looked like rain. We struck our tents at 0600 hours and moved as far as Biatozorka. A decent Sunday breakfast, which we prepared ourselves: Fried liver with scrambled eggs. The sun appeared through the clouds. At 1130 hours, we crossed the former Russian frontier and headed in the direction of Kiev. We formed the advance guard along with a heavy machine-gun platoon of the infantry. We anticipated resistance; but the Russians had taken off. We fired a few rounds into a grain field after some fleeing Russians. We had some riding lessons on Cossack horses. We spent the night in some woods.

7 July 1941: We continued east. The Russians cannot keep up with the retreat. Tired and indifferent, they remained back from their forces and surrendered to their fate. The number of deserters increased daily.

8 July: Advance guard again. We got the Russians on the road to Starokonstantynow. A decent amount of firing. The Russians fled; hardly thought about putting up a defense. We took a lot of prisoners and inflicted a lot of casualties on the Reds. We captured a depot with ammunition, uniforms and provisions. The 2nd Platoon started screening; there was said to be a threat from tanks on the right. Suddenly, tanks…we moved forward and fired. Three tanks were destroyed; the others pulled back in the quickest way possible. We advanced carefully; it turned out that they were German tanks. Very regrettable. We spent the night in Swinna.

9 July 1941: The weather is very hot. We only moved a few kilometers east of Swina. Bad thunderstorms with rain during the night.

10 July 1941: The unimproved roads have turned to mud. We moved through Starokonstantynow. We ran into the Stalin Line southeast of the city; heavy resistance. *Unteroffizier* Raydt was wounded. The enemy fired harassment fire. During the night, a large round landed nearby. I had to find another place to sleep.

11 July 1941: The harassment fire continued. Friendly artillery was also firing. While I am writing these lines, I have to be prepared to seek cover at any moment, since the rounds are continuously impacting to the right and left. Very unpleasant. In the afternoon, at 1530 hours, the attack on the Stalin Line was started. The Russians defended desperately. When we penetrated, there was occasional close-quarters fighting, man-to-man. The right wing has come to a standstill. The attack will probably be continued tomorrow.

12 July 1941: The right wing was brought forward. The Reds fought bitterly. The Russians wanted to leave their bunkers, but they are chased back by the commissars and the bunkers are sealed from the outside. The Russians fear the commissars a great deal.

13 July 1941: The fighting continued. The Russians shelled us with long-range artillery. All of the efforts of the sounding battalion to locate the battery have failed so far. Two Russian air attacks; heavy friendly casualties. *Leutnant* Wagner was wounded. We reached Jablojovka.

14 July 1941: The Russians were firing their artillery with everything they had. I went with my radio for hours on end through the marshland; sometimes I sank up to my torso. Good that the Russians fired so many duds. It was the first time that I almost collapsed. The sun beats down with a vengeance. We reached the village of Skarzynitze under the heat. Air attack. Terrible storms. The unimproved roads were untrafficable again.

15 July 1941: The Russians appear to have cleared the field again. Not a round was fired. The advance continued. The sun was very hot once again. We moved through Salinca to Pagarce. We remained there, since a bridge had to be constructed first. The Russians are slowly starting to destroy everything behind them.

16 July 1941: We continued east from Pagarce. Muggy at 1400 hours; heavy thunderstorms at 1500 hours. We continued once again as an advance guard. We ran into Russians outside of the village of Wujna. Three assault guns, 2 guns (2 centimeter) of the Army *Flak* and two platoons of infantry attacked a greatly superior force. After three hours of hard fighting, the Russians fled. It was a crystal-clear night; we slept out in the open.

17 July 1941: We are still in the village of Wujna and are awaiting further orders. We have slaughtered a pig and roast it using the most primitive means out in the open. The artillery is exchanging fire with one another. We occasionally had to take cover, but that did not disturb the roast. Rations and supplies are having a difficult time coming forward; we have to feed ourselves. Unfortunately, there is not too much to be gotten. A Russian captain was taken prisoner; he stated the Russians intended to attack the village during the night. We took the necessary precautions.

18 July 1941: There was no attack. We are still waiting in Wujna for fuel, ammunition and rations. The trains have not followed; the unimproved roads are a sea of mud. We got potatoes and turnips for ourselves and have roasted a small pig. You have to know how to help yourself. It started to pour rain at 1100 hours. If it continues, we'll get stuck here. An *Unteroffizier* "procured" some flour; we're now baking bread. Artillery fire for an hour; rounds impacted in close proximity. We were very lucky.

19 July 1941: It rained during the night; the unimproved roads are impossible. We brought up fuel, ammunition and rations with prime movers. In the evening, the infantry tossed the Russians back a few kilometers, so that we will have it quiet tonight.

20 July 1941: Today marks four weeks of having contact with the enemy. That makes you tired, and the bad weather oppresses the spirit. Everything is turning out differently then we imagined it. We went to Machnowka during the afternoon; it's supposed to be quiet. Nine Russian fighters strafed us with machine guns. Perhaps we'll move against Kiev?

21 July 1941: I slept in a tent during the night. It looked like rain. There are all sorts of rumors, but no one knows any specifics. Rain again towards evening.

22 July 1941: Weather nothing special. Cleaned my things properly once again. Rations situation bad; nothing comes forward.

23 July 1941: Departure at 0430 hours. Very cool weather until noon. We moved through Berditscheff and Shitomir to Makaroff. Shitomir, the first large Russian city with a street car. But no comparison to a German city. There was a hard-surface road from Shitomir to Kiev.

24 July 1941: Departure at 1030 hours. The route has been marked by the fighting. Many Russians lay dead along the way and in the fields, but there are also many German graves along the route. We stopped at the northern outskirts of Andrejewka. The weather was nice; the sun was very hot. We were at a cemetery and spent the night there. The cemeteries are all neglected; nothing has been done to the graves — forbidden!

25 July 1941: It started to rain again during the night. Shortly after that, the enemy started to fire artillery, and we had to find a safe place to sleep. There was nice weather again during the afternoon. There are many dead Russians in the vicinity; the smell from the corpses is quite powerful. Because of that, we had to bury them today. Our quarters location is an assembly area for the attack on Kiev. When will the storm break?

26 July 1941: The skies were cloudy. The sun came out around 1100 hours; it looked like it would be nice. We spent the time sleeping and roasting potatoes. The Russians had left us in peace this past night. But they sent us a few greetings in the morning, which were responded to by our artillery. Around 1500 hours, we had to endure a terrible artillery barrage. There were many dead among the infantry; *Kanonier* Hütter was wounded. Around 1700 hours, a few German bombers showed up and bombed the Russian positions.

27 July 1941: Today was the sixth Sunday spent on Russian territory. It rained until 1230 hours. The Russians haven't been heard from; in their place our artillery did the talking. We are still waiting for the attack. The ring around Kiev probably has not yet been closed. Ungodly amounts of artillery have arrived. Will Kiev become a second Warsaw? Around 1800 hours, there was enemy artillery fire; exactly in the place we are staying. Everyone was amazed that nothing bad happened. So as to avoid similar unpleasant surprises in the middle of the night, we pulled back a few kilometers.

28 July 1941: We were awakened by Russian fighters, which strafed us at low altitude with machine guns. The noise was greater than the effect, however. At 1900 hours, a spy was court-martialed and executed by firing squad. It rained again in the evening.

29 July 1941: The weather was nice the entire day. You could hear the thundering of the guns in the distance. We will attack tomorrow.

30 July 1941: 0345 hours, light fog; the weather would be nice. Three different attacks. From Lipowka to Karolewka to the line of departure. Fighting in the woods. The Reds took large losses. One gun was taken out at 30 meters; that was followed by an entire battery with limbers. Many prisoners. Received a ricochet on my helmet. *Gefreiter* Pohl was wounded. Second attack: Fighting in the village of Goleja. The battalion physician and *Kanonier* Kapischke wounded. Third attack: Combed through the woods east of Goleja. The Russians have cleared the field, however, since there was heavy artillery fire on the woods before the attack. A few prisoners. Air attack. A lot of luck — the bomb exploded 20 meters behind us; two infantrymen were killed. Back in Karolewka at 22000 hours. Dead tired. Slept on the ground.

31 July 1941: Very hot. Attack around 1900 hours. The village of Maijdonawka was supposed to be taken. The enemy had fled. We spent the night in Maijdonawka.

1 August 1941: We attacked with the infantry at 0600 hours. The attack objective was reached without incident. We were supposed to feel our way forward further east. We pursued the enemy with a platoon of infantry and opened fire. One gun ran over mines and was immobilized. The crew dismounted. The driver, *Gefreiter* Kloth, was the last one to jump off and landed right on a mine. He was killed immediately. The other gun was damaged and had to pull back. The 25 infantry were not able to hold, since heavy enemy fire commenced. We pulled back to the last attack objective. At 1400 hours, we attempted to recover the gun and the dead with minesweepers and four of our people. The Russians had already started to plunder the crew's belongings. When they saw us, they opened up with a wild burst of fire, so that we had to pull back again. At 1700 hours, we supported an attack. Despite the enemy's great superiority, we were able to advance. The Russians had an incredible amount of artillery, and they sent their "blessings" on over to us. It was terrible! Our last armored ammunition carrier, which was still operational, ran over a mine. The driver, *Kanonier* Czermak, was killed. The assistant driver, *Kanonier* Cantz, was badly wounded. A German barrage balloon was shot down by Russian fighters. We moved to Majdanawka during the night.

2 August 1941: We were at the northern outskirts of Majdanawka. The enemy artillery fire became so heavy, however, that we had to move back to the southern outskirts. Around 1500 hours, the fire closed in close enough here that we also started to have thoughts, so that we pulled back to the trains at Karolewka.

3 August 1941: We were finally pulled back to Makaroff to work on the vehicles. I pitched my tent right next to the water. Nice opportunity to go in the water. First delousing.

4 August 1941: The skies were partially cloudy; the weather was good. We worked on the vehicles. Weapons and personal belongings were brought back to snuff. This evening we will attempt to recover our two dead.

5 August 1941: Unfortunately, we were only able to recover one of our dead, *Kanonier* Czermak. We had to give up on everything else, since the entire area was under heavy artillery fire. The weather was good.

6 August 1941: The weather was very warm. Went in the water and maintained personal belongings.

7 August 1941: It turned windy and the skies clouded up. "Iron calm!"

8 August 1941: It started to rain during the night. Departed for Plisszkoje, south of Kiev, at 0830 hours. We were supposed to be employed immediately; but things turned out differently. For the time being, we stayed where we were. It rained the entire day, and it was very cool. Around 1500 hours, things cleared up.

9 August 1941: A few showers the entire day. Otherwise quiet.

10 August 1941: Departed Plisszkoje at 0530 hours. We went to another army corps and wound up in Jankowtsche. The situation changed again at 1600 hours. We broke camp and moved south 25 kilometers: Through Wassilkoff to Oljschanka. Apparently, we will be going to a new division.

11 August 1941: Rest in Malaja- Oljschanka. Weather good.

12 August 1941: Departed for Peressalenje at 0900 hours. Moved though a monotonous area. The villages were spread very far apart.

13 August 1941: An attack along the Dnjepr was supposed to take place on 15 August 1941. We were supposed to remain here until then. But things turned out differently. The combat elements suddenly moved out at 1700 hours. We moved about 50 kilometers to the southeast up to the front lines. The infantry was happy that we had arrived. The Russians had launched counterattacks the last few days, some with tanks. Hundreds of Russian dead or wounded remained behind in the course of these attacks. We were supposed to attack in the evening. The attack was postponed to first light, however. We spent the night in this village, 400 meters from the enemy positions. The crying and moaning of the wounded Russians could clearly be heard.

14 August 1941: The situation changed overnight again. At 0300 hours, we moved 15 kilometers north to another regiment. The attack was not to begin until the morning. It was very hot. *Stuka* attacks on the bridge.

15 August 1941: Awakened at 0300 hours. Started to attack in the direction of the Dnjepr at 0500 hours. The valley with the city of Kanew was still enshrouded with fog when we opened fire. The Battery Commander's vehicle ran over a mine; no one was wounded. We engaged Russians pulling back from field positions. Our infantry advanced very slowly. We attacked again in the afternoon. Bad storms; completely soaked; the ground was slippery. Moved without infantry into a Russian field position that had been previously engaged. Eerie and broken visibility; rounds hits us from close by. Couldn't see anything, since everything was full of dead and wounded. The riflemen were hard to make out. We were fortunate and got out of the position. *Unteroffizier* Drohne had artillery shrapnel in his bones; *Leutnant* Ulbricht was shot through the upper thigh.

16 August 1941: The attack continued. I stayed back today, since the 2nd Platoon was almost completely disabled. The Platoon Leader's vehicle was repaired; we then went back to Kanew, where the combat elements were. Kanew was taken today. The Russians blew up the railway bridge over the Dnjepr in the afternoon. A lot of prisoners. It was a hot day. *Oberkanonier* Weller was wounded.

17 August 1941: Sunday. We moved from Kanew about 40 kilometers to the northwest to Dratschi. Apparently, we were going to another sector again.

18 August 1941: Very hot day. One gun got out of the maintenance facility; halfway back to us, it ran over a mine. *Unteroffizier* Wirkner was wounded when that happened. A third of the battery has run over mines so far. If that keeps up, we'll be able to all go home soon. Bad storms at 2100 hours.

19 August 1941: Nice weather; quiet. Waiting for new employment.

20 August 1941: Day of rest.

21 August 1941: Nice weather. Will probably depart in the morning.

22 August 1941: Departed at 0400 hours; 40 kilometers to the north. Remained in Nowassilka. At 1800 hours, we departed for the attack position.

23 August 1941: Awakened at 0300 hours. We had to move across a hill that could be observed by the enemy, so we had to leave in the darkness. Attack at 0600 hours. The village of Tripolij was taken without great difficulty. The battery-officer vehicle ran over a mine. The driver, *Kanonier* Plottnik, lost his hearing. *Kanonier* Schneider was wounded in the head. Second attack at 1500 hours. We were reducing enemy bridgeheads. In each instance, the Russians had to be thrown over the Dnjepr. We spent the night in Dolena.

24 August 1941: Sunday; departure at 1300 hours. We moved 25 kilometers to Karlik. The entire battalion was assembled there. Looks like we are going to a new sector again.

25 August 1941: It rained occasionally. Otherwise, we got ready for a long movement. We are going to go to the *17. Armee* in the south.

26 August 1941: Departed at 0800 hours through Schependowka, Wincetoska, Bagustaf, Medevia and Lisjanka as far as Swenigorodka. The weather was nice.

27 August 1941: Continued marching at 0600 hours via Wogadschefk, Lodawatka, Schpola, Statopol and Schpalowo to Fedwar. It looked like rain. The march 300 kilometers south of Kiev is boring; always the same scenery. Sometimes not a single building for 20 kilometers.

28 August 1941: We continued marching at 0800 hours. It rained in buckets; the unimproved roads became muddy. We moved about 90 kilometers to the southeast and stayed in a small place. We found some great cooking oil, lard, eggs and flour at a collective farm.

29 August 1941: The weather was good once again. In the morning, we moved another 10 kilometers to a larger village, where we waited for further orders. We pitched camp in an overgrown garden. I hope we will continue soon, since the locals are completely filled with lice.

30 August 1941: Day of rest; weather good.

31 August 1941: Sunday; day of rest.

1 September 1941: Very hot. Tomorrow is an offensive; the advance is supposed to start up again.

2 September 1941: Departed Mironaka at 0500 hours for Pawlisch. We waited there, until we were transported across the Dnjepr. The 2nd and 3rd Batteries were sent across ahead of us and formed a bridgehead. We will then form a strong advance guard so as to penetrate deeply into the enemy. Departed at 1700 hours for Plotnikowka. We spent the night there. Heavy rainfall at 1800 hours.

3 September 1941: 1100 hours. We were transported across the 800-meter-wide Dnjepr on ferries. Air attack. We stayed in Solotnischtsche. Slept in stalls. Air attack again during the night.

4 September 1941: Awakened at 0400 hours. We were supposed to attack. Called off again. The bridge over the Dnjepr was finished; unbelievably long. The trains were fetched across it. Several air attacks. It was very cold. The skies were overcast. The Russians attempted again and again to attack the bridge, using the cover of the clouds. They were chased away by combined fires, however. Towards noon, we moved to Leschtschenki and remained there.

5 September 1941: At 1000 hours we went to the village of Jeristonaka. At 1400 hours, there was supposed to be an attack through the village of Mischtschenki as far as the rail line, which leads from the east to Krementschug. The Russians were so horrified by the appearance of the assault guns, that they ran as fast as they could. The Russian losses were very high. Our rounds caused terrible destruction. The regimental commander spoke words of praise for the assault artillery. We stayed in the village.

6 September 1941: Departed Lonrikowka at 1600 hours for Potiki. There's be an attack across the Psjol tomorrow. The Russians have been annoying us every few moments with aircraft. There's nothing to be seen of the German air superiority in this sector. The *Flak* was lucky — a direct hit and a bomber crashed in flames. The Russians fired harassment fire all night long. The Battery Commander wanted to recon the way to the bridge over the Psjol and was slightly wounded in the process.

7 September 1941: 0600 hours. Our artillery fired an incredible barrage on the far bank of the Psjol. At 0800 hours, we crossed the Psjol on the railway bridge. All of the regiments have been clamoring for us. We conducted the first attack at 1300 hours. More than 100 prisoners were taken; many dead Russians have been left behind. The mutilations are terrible. The Battery Commander vehicle was hit by an antitank gun. Everything turned out alright again, however. The driver, *Gefreiter* Schlemminger, the radio operator, *Gefreiter* Heynemann, and *Kanonier* Maslowski were slightly wounded. The antitank gun was immediately knocked out by us.

8 September 1941: Attack at 0930 hours. We were supposed to cut off Krementschug. The attack advanced without any noticeable resistance. A horse-drawn carriage of the Russians was destroyed by us. The Russians fired with artillery. A direct hit struck our battery. *Kanonier* Lipp is dead; *Kanonier* Titus was slightly wounded and *Unteroffizier* Kläden and *Unteroffizier* Flintrop were badly wounded. We spent the night in the village. The enemy fired harassment fires.

9 September 1941: It rained the entire night. Effective today, I have been designated as the gunner in the gun. Attack at 1600 hours. It's really a strange feeling when you sight on a target with your finger on the trigger; you only have to press with your finger and a lot of people are dead or wounded. After we reached the attack objective, our gun had an engine problem. We had to go to the maintenance facility.

10 September 1941: The weather has been bleak and cool. The damage to the gun has been repaired. We went back to the combat elements. There was no attack today. We were attacked by eight Russian bombers at 1700 hours; it was very unpleasant, but there was no damage.

11 September 1941: Awakened at 0400 hours. We were supposed to attack. We were then supposed to conduct a reconnaissance-in-force, but the continuous rain put an end to that plan.

12 September 941: Attack against the village of Omjelnik at 0830 hours. The Russians had good field fortifications and were difficult to dislodge. The village was in our hands around noon. A few prisoners; most of the Russians were dead. *Leutnant* Preußer, our new Platoon leader, was wounded. Shot clean through the helmet, but he was only grazed on the head. I watched the whole thing and immediately took out the Russian rifleman. We spent the night in Omjelnik. Light harassment fire from the Russians.

13 September 1941: At 0800 hours, we went to the trains in Romanik. The *14. Pz.Div.* of *Panzergruppe von Kleist* has arrived in sector and will probably take up the pursuit of the Russians. We have been attached to a new division. Departed at 1300 hours. We crossed the Psjol again. We stopped in a grain field outside of Ssilezbi and slept in our overcoats during the night. The enemy fired harassment fires at us again, 300 meters in front of us.

14 September 1941: Sunday. Attack at 1400 hours. We went about 19 kilometers to the northeast. The attack was very successful. We eliminated five trucks, one staff car, one prime mover, one heavy gun and one light gun with our gun. In addition, three horse-drawn vehicles. The Russian losses were very high. The other guns of the battery eliminated several enemy batteries. During the night, the enemy fired several rounds into the village where we were sleeping. You can't help but notice that the resistance is slowly being transformed into flight. The Russian infantry is no longer as good as it once was. All of them are older people; some have been soldiers barely a week. The weather has turned nice again. Pomp, Piel and Lehmann have been reported as missing.

15 September 9141: At 0900 hours we moved back to where we stopped yesterday. We were supposed to attack again. The enemy apparently had had enough and fled. Endless friendly columns are marching like they did in the first days of the advance. The weather has been very good, and morale has climbed. The hope is once again present that the campaign in the east will come to a successful conclusion this year. The missing personnel reported back at 1300 hours. All of them without vehicles. One staff car and one motorcycle have fallen into Russian hands. At 1500 hours, we moved out with a reconnaissance battalion as the advance guard. Our platoon took the lead. Surprisingly, we advanced 30 kilometers to the east. We captured eight trucks with provisions and destroyed one truck. *Unteroffizier* Adam was wounded.

16 September 1941: Continued to march at 0600 hours; 5 kilometers to the next village. Caught a vehicle column of 40 trucks. One staff car and two trucks were fired upon and set ablaze. During the course of the day, we caught some more vehicles and, towards evening, yet another entire column. Our successes this day: 30-kilometer advance; around 80 trucks, some captured, others destroyed. Many prisoners. Once again, there are enough rations, since the captured vehicles are stuffed full of them. A staff car from our battery was fired at and set on fire. A gun ran over a mine; the damage was repaired after two hours. The weather has been cool; it rained in the morning, and the roads have been softened up.

17 September 1941: It was very cool. The first enemy tanks were sighted in the afternoon. A road ran parallel to us, five kilometers away. The Russians were pulling back along it. A race started. The Russians were screening their retreat with tanks. Towards evening, we were involved in an intense firefight with Russian tanks. We knocked out two tanks with our gun; we then engaged an enemy truck column. We had to pull back, because we had run out of ammunition.

18 September 1941: We waited in a cut field until noon for further orders. At approximately 1300 hours, we took off. We had not gone very far, when there were Russian tanks in front of us. The fireworks started. We set two tanks alight with our gun. We got to the main road to Poltawa. Panic broke out among the Russians who were withdrawing. People on foot, horse, wheeled columns and tanks all raced through one another. We fired into their midst with two assault guns. Ten tanks were knocked out and more than 1,000 prisoners taken. Towards evening, we surfaced by surprise into the flanks of the enemy and caused unholy confusion. The Russians left behind an unbelievable amount of materiel and dead. We spent the night at the Poltawa airport. A prime mover was hit by an antitank gun; *Unteroffizier* Vogler was wounded.

19 September 1941: We moved back to the trains with our gun in order to get it back in operation. The weather is cool.

20 September 1941: It was very cool. We no longer slept in tents; instead, we slept in the clay huts. The insects have shown up in droves; it is very uncomfortable. Our gun is still not repaired. The other guns are involved in heavy fighting with Russian tanks.. One gun was hit. The entire cupola was torn off, and *Unteroffizier* Hacker, the gunner, was wounded. The rest of the crew is on edge. The gun was finished in two days and given a new crew so that the other crew can recover from its shock. The Battery Commander and *Obergefreiter* König were badly wounded. The Battery Commander will likely lose a leg. *Obergefreiter* [König] has shrapnel in his lungs. *Kanonier* Golinski was wounded in the arm. *Leutnant* Spielmann has taken over the battery for the time being.

21 September 1941: Our gun was ready; we moved to the combat elements 30 kilometers north of Poltawa. We had barely arrived, when we were told we were going to a new division. We moved back to Poltawa. We had just finished finding quarters for the night and being among halfway cultivated people, when the combat elements were informed to get ready. We moved a few kilometers outside of the city in the direction of Kharkov. We stayed there. You could see traces of the fighting in Poltawa.

22 September 1941: We were the advance guard again. We ran into enemy field fortifications after a few kilometers. Our guns had a devastating effectiveness. There was a battalion of men in the positions — 40 to 50 years old — without any outside communications. The commissars had fled; the people there were supposed to hold us up. They knew nothing about the situation. The battalion was wiped out. Most of them were dead; the remainder went into captivity. We continued on in the afternoon. Suddenly, there was an attack by four Russian bombers at low level. No damage. We wound up in a patch of woods when it was dark and slept in the open.

23 September 1941: We had to go back to Poltawa with our gun to get it repaired. That will most likely take a few days. The Battalion Commander, *Major* Christ, was wounded. The new Commander arrived today: *Hauptmann Freiherr* von und zu Barisani.

25 September 1941: The weather was nice. Took a walk through the city; very interesting.

26 September 1941: We waited for the maintenance facility [to get done]. The battery was fighting in Kharkov with heavy Russian tanks. One of our guns was fired on and set alight. The crew had just enough time to dismount. The gun had already run over mines twice before and had received a direct hit on 20 September 1941. A command and control vehicle received a direct hit: *Leutnant* Fellbier, *Gefreiter* Traub and *Gefreiter* Schlemminger dead. *Kanonier* Hütter and *Kanonier* Jung were wounded. *Leutnant* Spielmann is leading the battery. He has already been slightly wounded four times and is the only officer left of the original six that we had started with.

27 September 1941: The advance party for the maintenance facility arrived. We moved two kilometers to the hall that the maintenance personnel had occupied. Air attacks the entire day.

28 September 1941: Sunday. Worked on the gun. Air attacks.

29 September 1941: It rained the entire day. No Russian pilot to be seen far and wide. The new commander moved the entire battalion to Poltawa. The batteries are no longer operational. The loss in guns and personnel has been great. Our combat element — 50 men — has had 36 wounded and 8 dead up to this point.

30 September 1941: Maintenance.

1 October 1941: Maintenance.

2 October 1941: *Oberleutnant* Liedtke, the Battalion Adjutant, assumed command of our battery. A flyer from the *Führer* was read aloud by the Battalion Commander in front of the entire battalion. Today was the day to deliver the final blow. We hope to be with the battery in the next few days. Nice weather.

3 October 1941: Nice weather. We listened to the *Führer's* speech as a group at 1800 hours.

4 October 1941: Promotion party for *Wachtmeister* Hetzert.

5 October 1941: Worship service in a Party building. All around are pictures of leading men of the Communist Party.

6 October 1941: It was very cool. The 2nd and 3rd Batteries departed. The Battery Commander of the 3rd Battery, *Oberleutnant* Goewe, was killed.

7 October 1941: It snowed. The Headquarters Battery also departed. We still have to wait a few days; the new guns have not arrived yet.

8 October 1941: Deloused today.

9 October 1941: We received three new guns. Departure is planned for 11 October 1941.

10 October 1941: Rained the entire day. Preparations for departure.

11 October 1941: Frost during the night. Departed at 0600 hours towards Kharkov. Terrible weather during the afternoon: Snow and rain. The unimproved roads are muddy. Spent the night in clay huts.

12 October 1941: Snowed and rained the entire day. A small attack in the afternoon. Four buildings, in which the Russians had taken up quarters, were fired on and set alight.

13 October 1941: Terrible muck outside. We sat in a clay hut and waited. The Russians fired occasionally with their *"Ratsch-Bumm"*, a devilish weapon.

14 October 1941: Awakened at 0100 hours. We moved 10 kilometers forward; we were supposed to turn back an attack by the Russians. The attack did not take place; we moved back in the darkness to our old quarters. It was terribly cold; staying outside was practically impossible. A *Rata* was hit and crashed vertically from the skies.

15 October 1941: We moved back to the old position at 0500 hours and waited. Alerted at 1400 hours; we moved to the right wing. Two Russian heavy tanks attacked. There was a half hour of fireworks, and then both of the Russians fled. We had to look for our quarters in the next position after it had already turned dark. Rations only make it forward once a day; nothing but cold stuff.

16 October 1941: The weather has changed again. There was no frost overnight. There's a fresh breeze which is drying the unimproved roads. We relieved the 1st Platoon at 1300 hours, which was employed up front to screen. Nothing was happening, however. We moved back to our quarters in the darkness.

17 October 1941: 0430 hours. We moved out as the advance guard with bicycles and other arms of service. We encountered light resistance just outside of a village. It was broken, however, and 200 prisoners taken and 3 horse-drawn vehicles with rations captured. *Leutnant* Spielmann was wounded for the fifth time. He got artillery shrapnel in the knee. When it was dark, we reached a village and surprised some Russian eating dinner in the houses. Once again, we took a lot of prisoners.

18 October 1941: We moved out again at 0800 hours. Nothing special. We set up quarters in a larger village. A lot of deserters.

19 October 1941: Sunday. For a change, a quiet Sunday. Only the coffee and cake was missing. Suddenly, we departed at 1530 hours. We moved a few kilometers. It rained. We reached our objective in the darkness. We spent the night with 20 men in a hut — like sardines.

20 October 1941: It rained. No vehicles moved forward. We continued in the direction of Kharkov with a troop of horse cavalry and three assault guns. We reached an improved road and formed the lead. There were targets all over the place. Russian trucks and horse-drawn columns were completely amazed whenever we showed up. Assorted vehicles tried to escape, but our rounds were faster. The Russians suffered large losses in men and materiel.

21 October 1941: Reinforcements arrived during the night. The Russians fired into our village.

22 October 1941: The suburbs of Kharkov are practically in our hands. Artillery activity. We received ammunition today from the 3rd battery. We are waiting for fuel and rations.

23 October 1941: The attack on Kharkov was supposed to start at noon. The fuel was still not here. Attack at 1200 hours; the fuel arrived ahead of time. We attacked 20 minutes after the artillery preparation. We were two guns and eliminated four tanks and several guns during the fighting along the road. The buildings looked dilapidated; almost all of the bridges have been blown up. We were the first German soldiers in Kharkov. We spent the night in the buildings.

24 October 1941: Things continued at 0800 hours. Each street had to be contested. There were barricades and tanks at every street corner. A few civilians paid for their curiosity with their lives. Once again, a lot of things were destroyed today. I cannot describe all the things I saw during these days. We spent the night in the eastern part of the city. It rained towards evening. Our trains have finally reached firm roads. We can look forward to some rations again.

25 October 1941: We moved to the center of the city at 0800 hours. We were supposed to continue mopping up, but we encountered no resistance. While searching the buildings, civilians fired at soldiers; they are hanging in the middle of the city from trees, including two women. The Reds set their own prison on fire so as to keep their shameful deeds covered up.

26 October 1941: Sunday. The weather was nice today. We set up quarters in a large building. Quiet. I took a look at the city. There are whole blocks of buildings that are dilapidated. The interior courtyards are packed with garbage. It should be noted that there are wonderful churches, which have been built in an Oriental style. Unfortunately, all of them are being used for unintended purposes. "Palace of the Proletariat": a fabulous construction with every imaginable luxury. I really doubt, however, that a working man was ever allowed to enter this building. It would lead too far astray to record all of my impressions. In any case, no comparison with a German city.

27 October 1941: Rained the entire day. Rations are becoming increasingly scarce; apparently, nothing is coming forward. In the evening, there was a party among the combat elements with Russian wine.

28 October 1941: It rained without let up. Quiet.

29 October 9141: We slaughtered two cows for the combat elements — supplemental rations.

30 October 1941: Two civilians were shot, because they wanted to blow up a bridge.

31 October 1941: Rain. Quiet.

1 November 1941: Preparations for departure.

2 November 1941: We were supposed to depart today, but no fuel arrived. Weather not so bad.

3 November 1941: The vehicles that were supposed to fetch the fuel were brought back by prime movers, because the unimproved roads were not trafficable.

4 November 1941: Departed at 0600 hours. We received captured fuel. The improved roads stopped a few kilometers outside of Kharkov, and the misery started. It was a labor-intensive effort to move forward.

5 November 1941: It was sheer misery. The roads are impossible and cannot be described in words. Food is out of the question. Several vehicles have gotten bogged down and have to be written off as total losses.

6 November 1941: Movement became ever more difficult. The weather continued to worsen. We reached Krasnograd; that is, 100 kilometers in three days.

7 November 1941: The battery had to be collected together. We stayed a day. It rained.

8 November 1941: We continued. We got to 40 kilometers outside of Dnjeptopetrovsk.

9 November 1941: A cobblestone road started. The weather was good. We crossed the Dnjepr at Dnjepropetrovsk. There are many graves for German soldiers in the city. There is a relatively good road leading south.

10 November 1941: At Dnjeprostroje, we crossed the Dnjepr on ferries. It took half a day. We spent the night in Saporoschje.

11 November 1941: Demolished bridges delayed the march considerably. We got as far as 60 kilometers outside of Melitopol.

12 November 1941: Reached Melitopol.

13 November 1941: -10 degrees during the night. [14 degrees Fahrenheit]

14 November 1941: The cold continued. Departed at 1200 hours. 80 kilometers further.

15 November 1941: Reached Perekop on the narrows to the Crimea. Many soldier graves along the way
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16 November 1941: Spent the night in Dzankoje.

17 November 1941: Reached Simferopol at noon, the capital of the Crimea.

18 November 1941: I went with 4 trucks to Perekop (306 kilometers). Picked up fuel and oil. The weather is wet and cold.

19 November 1941: Thorough cleaning of the clothes. The lice are tormenting us more and more.

20 November 1941: It snowed and was bitterly cold. The assault on the fortress of Sevastopol is supposed to start on 26 November 1941. [End of diary entries.]

First-Hand Account by Leutnant Werner Salamon (2./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197)

When we were released from attachment to the *57. Inf.Div.* on 22 July 1941, I had to turn my platoon over to *Leutnant* Rehbein, so that he could go "forward" once. To my great disappointment, I had to take over his duties as the leader of the trains. During the evening of 22 July 1941, the combat elements moved out from Machnowka in the direction of Berditschew. They proceeded towards Makaroff via Shitomir, which, it should be noted, was the first larger [Soviet] city with a population of about 8,000. Makaroff is about 50 kilometers from Kiev.I followed early in the morning of 23 July 1941 with the trains. From Berditschew to Makaroff, we moved along the first asphalt road in Russia [that we had encountered].This started a boring period for those of us in the trains; at the same time, the combat elements had to go through some very difficult fighting in the area southeast of Korosten. In the beginning, my mission was to get ammunition and rations for the battery, until the battalion took this responsibility away and made me, in a manner of speaking, "unemployed". That started the most boring part of the war [for me], but there was nothing you could do about it. At the end of July, the battalion was pulled out of this area of operations and received a few days of rest so as to bring the vehicles, some of which had been damaged by mines, back up to par. On 2 August 1941, I took advantage of the opportunity and visited our wounded *Leutnant* Becker in Schepetowka, which was about 250 kilometers from our quarters. On 7 August 1941, I received the General Assault Badge. I

took over my platoon again on 8 August 1941. We proceeded in the direction of Kiev, accompanied by very bad weather. We ran into Russian air attacks a lot during this march, which was not very pleasant. Initially, we were supposed to be employed against Kiev, but we received different orders *en route*, and we marched further to the southeast. On 13 August 1941, we went to a conference at the headquarters of the *132. Inf. Div.*, with which we were supposed to reduce the Rshischtschew bridgehead. It was supposed to be a big deal. As we made our way back, we were halted; the battery was already moving further south again. We had been ordered to the *9. Inf.Div.*, which was supposed to take the large Russian bridgehead at Kanew. The attack had already been scheduled for 16 August 1941. In the course of the attack, the Russians were ejected from well-constructed field fortifications, which was largely thanks to our assault guns. We got to within four kilometers of Kanew. On 17 August 1941, the attack was continued. The Russians were worn down by the continuous attacks of our assault guns and only put up slight resistance. Kanew was taken on that day. The Russians had to leave behind a lot of materiel on the banks of the Dnjepr. Kanew had become a small "Dunkirk" for the Russians. Towards evening, our guns disrupted the crossing of a few small Russian units. On this day I was able to present the battery with five new captured trucks. Within a few minutes, *Leutnant* Bobisch and I took 32 prisoners (we were looking for an infantry battalion command post and had no idea [of what we were about to do]). The fact that the Russian leadership was topsy-turvy could be seen by the fact that the Soviet Air Force and artillery were letting bombs and shells land among their own forces. We were presented with a few days of rest. On the last day of rest, it was 28 August 1941, I was presented with the Iron Cross, 2nd Class. That same evening I had to go to the 1st Battery, along with my platoon. We were to be employed with it at first light. I had to cross a buckling bridge with my two guns. It turned out that one of the guns got stuck and, on top of everything else, in complete darkness. It took us five hours before we could get it freed up. As a result, we were only able to get a half hour's sleep in our vehicles. At first light we had to move further north. We initially occupied an assembly area. While we waited, my driver, Wiersing, and my radio operator, Bönike, made pancakes. There was plum butter with them — terrific! We went on to the Dnjepr. We had to halt in the open, because two bridges were *"kaputt"* (it should be noted that *kaputt* is a Russian word). Our guns transported heavy beams to the banks, so that the bridges could be repaired by the engineers. In fact, the engineers did get the bridges ready in the prescribed time, so that we were able to participate in the attack against the Russian bridgehead at Witatschew. We had to operate very carefully, however, since all of the area was infested with mines. Fortunately, however, nothing bad happened this time. We reached the village without appreciable resistance and were received by the people who lived there in a friendly manner. We were able to get anything the heart desired: Eggs, butter, milk, bread, fowl and fruit of all types. Originally, we were supposed to conduct an attack on 24 August 1941 against Tripolje, but nothing happened in that regard. The attack against that strong bridgehead was postponed for a day to allow reorganization of the forces. The 24th of August 1941 was a Sunday, and my crew had just cooked a splendid chicken soup , when orders arrived: "Get ready to move!" Our attachment relationship was suddenly rescinded and we were supposed to move some 350 kilometers from there to another field army. Effective immediately, we had been allocated to the *17. Armee*. We started on the long trip on 26 August 1941. We moved to Fedwar, some 30 kilometers north of Kirowograd, through Winzertowka, Bogusslaw, Swenigerowka, Schpoloa and Slatopol. I slept for the first time — somewhat against my will — in a pitiful Russian house, because it was raining without let-up. We moved out again the next morning in pouring rain. I made my command and control vehicle watertight and no longer let anyone get a glimpse of me. I did that even though it seemed to me as if I had been given three days of house arrest. We went through Glinsk and Kossowka to Worobojka and our quarters along very bad roads. The village must have been the most desolate one I had ever seen. How long would we have to wait there? We were in the vicinity of Krementschug, and the crossing of the Dnejpr was being prepared. On 1 September 1941, we moved forward in the direction of the Dnjepr, and we crossed it at 1400 hours on 2 September 1941. Our 22-ton assault guns were transported across on reinforced 16-ton ferries. All of the combat elements were across by 1700 hours; this despite the fact that one of the guns had to be transferred [to another ferry] in the middle of the river, since the ferry [it was on] started to leak. Our mission was to expand the just-established bridgehead on the east bank of the Dnjepr. For that reason we wanted to get to the battalion, to which we have been attached, as soon as possible. Unfortunately, we were surprised by the onset of darkness while moving, and we lost our way. Four of the five guns got stuck in marshland. As soon as we got one gun out of the muck, another one got stuck. It was enough to cause you to despair. We needed more than three hours to get out of this mess. We

reached out assembly area completely exhausted. On 3 September 1941, we moved in the direction of the Potoki trains station with an assault detachment of engineers. We were only able to move about two kilometers along the embankment, however, since the Russians were in well-constructed positions and we were unable to do anything against them. It was not until the middle of 4 September 1941 that the embankment and the railway bridge could be taken in hard fighting. The railway bridge was only slightly damaged in the fighting. A gun had cut the ignition charge by chance through gunfire and thus prevented the complete destruction of the bridge. Towards evening, a Russian armored train appeared off to our right; it had already come close to us a few times over the last few days. Our infantry caused it to derail by simply removing a rail from the track. That didn't stop it from firing, however. Both off my guns took up the fight and were able to achieve a few good hits, which then caused it to fly in the air. In the course of our advance to the railway, we were able to capture a Russian rations depot. There were a lot of cans of meat and fish, sugar and tobacco for everyone. Everyone could take as much butter as he wanted. Everyone was happy all the way around. We remained in the area until 6 September to screen. It was pretty quiet there then; only Russian artillery disturbed us occasionally with a few rounds. [Once] when I had just laid down to sleep, a shell landed near my hut causing the window glass to fall in my face. But nothing bad happened to me. During some reconnaissance, we looked at a splendid pontoon bridge across the Dnjepr. We were employed against Krementschug on 8 September 1941. *Leutnant* Bobisch and I went by ourselves into the city with the command and control vehicle without encountering any enemy. We were received by the local populace with bouquets of flowers. Krementschug had been systematically destroyed by the Soviets. I had never seen such a destructive venting before. In the days that followed, we helped to close the ring around Kiev. Our attachment relationship was rescinded on 13 September 1941. On the way to our new operational area, we ran into a lot of tanks from *Heeresgruppe Kleist* [*Panzergruppe Kleist*], which were relieving us to complete the ring around Kiev. We were then supposed to be employed against Poltava.

[End of the account.]

Activity Report of the 3./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197 from 13-16 August 1941

13 August 1941: At noon, the battery, which had conducted reconnaissance for another operation, was sent south in a hurry to the sector of the *9. Inf.Div.* The Battery Commander, *Oberleutnant* Goewe, reported the battery had arrived at 1800 hours at the command post of *Inf.Rgt. 57* in Kurilewka. Both of the platoons — one gun each — were attached to the 2nd battalion and went there that evening.

2nd Platoon (*Leutnant* Bobisch)

13 August: The combat elements moved out of Pressellenje at 1400 hours so as to be employed in the area around Kanew with the *II./Inf.Rgt. 57*. In the evening, at 2300 hours, the 2nd and 3rd Platoons — with one gun each ("C" Gun and "E" Gun) — linked up with [the battalion] in Pitwinjez. The battalion had taken the southern part of the village that evening. There was Russian artillery fire on the village the entire night. The northern part of the village and the high ground to its east were occupied by the enemy.

14 August 1941: The guns were employed to screen against infantry and tank attacks. The 2nd Battalion had advanced the furthest and had lodged a wedge in the Russian lines. In the afternoon, the platoon was attached to the 3rd Battalion, which was then to be employed with two companies against the northern part of Pitwinjez. The attack was set for 1845 hours. I positioned the guns to the left of the church, since moving along [with the infantry] through the area around the village, which was filled with defiles, would have offered little firing opportunities. The advanced of the infantry was supported by the successful elimination of enemy pockets of resistance, which had been identified by the infantry previously. In addition, we were able to observe the advance of the infantry from the left-hand division from our positions and support them with flanking fires. The signals officer of those infantry forces had established contact with me. I had the firing stop when it turned dark, since it was no longer possible to conduct observed fire. The infantry had not quite reached the objective they had been given. There had been heavy Russian artillery fire and several air attacks during the day.

15 August 1941: Attack with the *III./Inf.Rgt. 57* at 0400 hours against the high ground east of Pitwinjez, which the enemy was holding with well-constructed positions. The high ground was taken in very difficult

fighting. The attack only proceeded very slowly. The terrain was broken by very deep defiles, which made our movement difficult. We used a lot of ammunition against field fortifications of all types. Machine guns and nests of snipers, which cost the infantry a lot of casualties, were engaged. We fired high-explosive rounds against the fleeing Russians, who had been forced over to our sector by the neighboring battalion. We then moved along the trench line with our gun and dropped hand grenades into it. An antitank gun, which engaged us from a distance of 250 meters, was also rendered harmless. During a short halt, *Unteroffizier* Laas took 10 prisoners and relieved them of their map material. We made the occupation of the village of Kostonjez considerably easier from the ridgeline near there; the divisional artillery was not able to reach there with observed fire. The bypassing of the minefields required the greatest degree of caution! Our gun had fired around 250 rounds. The Russians lost a great deal of men and infantry weapons on this date. There were low-level air attacks and light artillery fire during the fighting. The platoon moved back to Pitwinjez for the night and to refuel and rearm.

16 August 1941: The attack in the direction of Kanew was continued. After conducting thorough reconnaissance to find a route clear of mines, I moved the gun up to south of Kostonjez and took field fortifications under fire. The 3rd Platoon joined up with the 2nd Platoon to fire on the field fortifications. While looking for the battalion command post, *Leutnant* Salamon and I took 32 armed Russians prisoner. After moving forward to the Dnjepr, I took the crossing Russians under fire and caused several of the boats to capsize. Together with the infantry, we captured a lot of trucks and motorcycles with sidecars. A large amount of abandoned guns, many trucks and a heavy tank were left in front of the bridge used for crossing. Ammunition consumption: More than 100 rounds. During the evening, the platoons were pulled back to Pitwinjez to assemble.

3rd Platoon (*Leutnant* Salamon)

13 August 1941: We took off from Kurlikowka as it turned dark. Due to the darkness, we only made slow progress and reached the western portion of Pitwinjez around 2300 hours. After reporting in to the commander of the *II./Inf.Rgt. 57*, we pulled into the southern part of the village, which the [battalion] had taken before it had turned dark. The northern portion of the village was still in enemy hands.

14 August 1941: Both guns were attached to the *III./Inf.Rgt. 57*, which was supposed to clear the northern part of the village. The attack was set for 1835 hours. The "E" Gun moved along the unimproved road to the right of the church and into the part of the village still occupied by the enemy, after it had engaged a couple of buildings. The village could not be entirely cleared of the enemy, because night fell and the Russians were still putting up resistance. After the onset of darkness, I ordered the gun to pull back. The attachment relationship to the *III./Inf.Rgt. 57* ended with this operation.

15 August 1941: The "E" Gun was attached to the *I./ Inf.Rgt. 57* for the attack at 0415 hours. Initially, the attack went well — about 1 kilometer — until the report came in that the enemy was in strong field fortifications on the road to Kanew. The gun moved forward with instructions to be especially on the lookout for mines. After a short period of time, the field fortification were eliminated by well-placed fire from the gun. In the meantime, the battalion was receiving heavy flanking fire form the left. The *I./ Inf.Rgt. 57* was employed on the left, but it was not able to advance much, since the Russians had dug in in great numbers there. After a mine-clearing section had checked the road, I had the "E" Gun move forward and eliminate the field fortifications. The attack still did not make any forward progress, because there was another complete system of strong field fortifications on the slope falling away to the left. The last resistance was broken after these positions were eliminated, which was done at very close range and with the help of infantry assault detachments. In a short period of time, the "E" Gun had destroyed several horse-drawn vehicles, an antitank gun and a number of infantry weapons. The attack was carried forward some 500 to 600 meters, until new Russian field positions appeared off to the right. The "E" Gun initially engaged these positions from the left side of the road, but it was not able to achieve full effectiveness until the asphalted road had been searched for mines and the gun was able to switch over to the right side of the road. With the help of the second gun, which had been attached to the *II./ Inf.Rgt. 57* up to this point, the resistance was broken in extremely short time. *Wachtmeister* Teriete succeeded in knocking out a tank (burning) and a fully loaded truck. The way to Kostonjez was then free. The "E" Gun had fired off about 260 rounds inthe course of the attack. It was pulled back to Pitwinjez for the night.

16 August 1941: The *II./ Inf.Rgt. 57* was employed against Kanew. The guns were not initially employed due to the great danger from mines. The enemy was putting up only barely nominal resistance at the

time. Although the battalion ran into well-constructed positions once again, the enemy was quickly ejected and many prisoners were taken. The infantry was able to march on Kanew without having to deploy. Because the gun could not follow the infantry due to the bad roads, I joined up with the platoon of *Leutnant* Bobisch, which was supposed to advance through Kanew with the *III./Infanterie-Regiment 57*. After we had moved through Kanew to the east, both guns were employed once again at the outskirts of the town. We considerably disrupted the crossing efforts of the Russians over the Dnjepr with high-explosive rounds. Once it turned dark, the guns were pulled back to Pitwinjez. Once that occurred, the attachment relationship to *Inf.Rgt. 57* was ended. Worthy of special note is the fact that *Leutnant* Bobisch and I took 32 Russians prisoner — most of them armed — in a short period of time.

[End of report: Rüdiger *Leutnant* and Acting Battery Commander]

After-Action Report of Leutnant Werner Salamon in Eliminating a Soviet Armored Train on 3 September 1941

Coming form Pawlysch on 2 September 1941, we crossed the Dnjepr on 16-ton ferries during the afternoon. We had been attached to the *125. Inf.Div.* and had been directed to report to *Inf.Rgt. 419* in Frunse. Early on 3 September 1941, I reported to the commander of the *III./ Inf.Rgt. 419*. We were supposed to conduct a reconnaissance of the terrain during the morning along with an engineer platoon. The 2nd Platoon, which had moved out ahead of me, had already started this mission and encountered enemy resistance between Nowosjalowka and the railway embankment to the north. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons went into position along the north side of the village, to be prepared to engage an armored train. During the evening of the same day, an armored train did indeed appear. It stopped about 1 to 1.5 kilometers in front of the train station at Potoki and opened fire. Although the 3rd Platoon was all the way to the right, it was not in position to engage the armored train, since it pulled back to the northeast relatively quickly. Despite this, *Unteroffizier* Neusens still fired a few rounds, all of which were too short. The armored train appeared again on 4 September 1941. This time, it stopped even further from the train station. The guns of the 3rd Platoon immediately advanced to within about 400 meters of the enemy-occupied railway embankment. They were unable to fire, however, since the armored train had noticed them and immediately pulled back. The attack against the embankment and the bridge over the Pssjol was launched at 1400 hours. Both of my guns were with the 9th Company, which was supposed to take the embankment and the village to the north of it. The attack was conducted aggressively, with the result that the attack objective was reached in a very short time. The 9th Company dug in on the northern edge of the village, while the "E" and the "F" Guns were used to screen. That evening, the armored train was reported approaching the Potoki train station. Both guns of the 3rd Platoon immediately moved towards the train. The "E" Gun of *Wachtmeister* Teriete, which was moving to the left of the embankment in the direction of the enemy, was the first to open fire on the armored train. In the meantime, the train had been brought to a standstill by the infantry, who were positioned along the embankment. They had removed a rail from the track. Despite this, the armored train fired from several 7.62-centimeter cannon and numerous machine guns. Light antitank guns of the infantry also started to engage the train at this point. The armored train consisted of two flat cars in the front and rear of the train to which were coupled an armored rail car in front of and behind the armored locomotive. The armored rail cars each had two turrets. *Wachtmeister* Teriete fired off all of his antitank ammunition and was also able to observe a few hits. In the meantime, the "F" Gun of *Unteroffizier* Neusens had approached to within 1200 meters and had also opened fire. *Unteroffizier* Neusens immediately continued to move forward with his gun, however, because its effect was not great enough [where he had been]. At about 400 meters — quite close to the left-hand side of the embankment — he was able to achieve hits. In the end, using cover from the infantry, he advanced to within 100 meters and fired off his last antitank rounds as well as a few high-explosive ones. According to information provided by the gun commanders, they had been able to observe several hits. Because it was already dark, however, neither of them could determine exactly, which parts of the train they had hit. Both gun commanders stated, however, that a portion of the train did not start to burn until their guns had hit it. As a result of these hits, the rear portion of the armored train then blew apart completely after an explosion some 1.5 to 2 hours later. Based on this, unfortunately, we can no longer determine the exact hit locations of the assault guns. On the morning of the following day, I took a detailed look at the train. I was able to see a few hits by our 7.5-centimeter main guns on the first armored rail car. They had penetrated the armor, but did not do anything to the rail car itself, since the rounds detonated about the height of the axles. The locomotive had hardly any damage. You could see a few ricochets from antitank guns and main guns. There were also a few penetrations from antitank rounds on the flue and on the lower edge of the armor, but all of these remained completely without effect. I am also of the opinion that one of the rail cars of the armored train was brought to an explosion by hits from the assault guns.

End of report: Rüdiger *Leutnant* and Acting battery Commander

Personal Reminiscences of Leutnant Willi Zimmermann (1./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197)

1st Part

I received my initial basic training with the artillery (*Artillerie-Rgt. 33* and *Artillerie-Rgt. 179*), where I also underwent my first combat operations of the war. In September 1941, I went to *StuG.-Ersatz-Abt. 300* in Schweinfurt. I received training there as a radio operator and a gunner, which lasted until October 1941. In November 1941, I was transferred to the *1.*/Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197, which was in Simferopol.17-31 December 1941: First attack on Sevastopol. I participated in the attack as a radio operator in a *SPW*. The *1.*/ StuG.Abt. 197 lost three out of four assault guns in this effort! In the meantime, the Russians had landed at Kerch, Feodosia and Eupatoria. The front was pulled back at Sevastopol in order to free up forces to engage the Russian bridgeheads. At the end of February 1942, the [battery] received six new guns (short barrels) with a sand-colored Africa camouflage scheme. We were then immediately ordered to the Parpatsch Position northeast of Feodosia. I was assigned to the gun of *Leutnant* Spielmann as a radio operator and loader. The Russians attempted to break through with tanks, and was able to gain territory in the Rumanian sector. We launched [immediate] counterattacks with a motorcycle battalion. Hill 22 — 28 meters above sea level! — was taken by us again and held against almost daily attacks by the Russians. The Africa colors proved to be quite practical in this terrain, since we were able to ideally conceal ourselves behind the mounds of dirt of almost the same color that the Russians had dug out. In the span of 20 days, our six assault guns were able to knock out 35 Russian tanks, most of them light tanks. The hardest work was a T 34. *Leutnant* Spielmann wanted to ram it, since our rounds simply would not penetrate it. Finally, however, one of the assault guns to our flank hit it with a hollow-charge round — with an effect like a shaped charge, but it ultimately did not prove itself in the field and was discontinued — in the engine compartment. The T 34 burned out with a powerful lance of flame. Around this time — it was the middle/end of March and there was no snow on the ground — there was an overnight freeze. We had moved in the evening from the main line of resistance back to our village so as to refuel, rearm and eat. Next morning, the assault guns were frozen to the muck! Only one of the guns was able to free itself undamaged after lengthy efforts. Any type of careless application of the 320-horsepower engine on the frozen tracks resulted in cracking the final drives or the gear pinions. The battery's maintenance section needed two days to repair all of the damage. During this time, the Russians almost succeeded in overrunning our positions. In April 1942, we participated in an attack of the *22. Pz.Div.* and its light Czech tanks [*Pz.Kpfw. 38t's*], which the Russians turned back with heavy loses for the *22. Pz.Div*. Following that, the division received *Pz.Kpfw. III's* and *Pz.Kpfw. IV's*. From the middle of April to the beginning of May 1942, it was quiet in the Sevastopol sector. We then spent several days in an assembly area northwest of Feodosia. From 8-15 May 1942, we broke through the Parpatsch Position and encircled the Russian forces. I participated as a "dismount" observer and gunner. The attack started on time with a bombardment by the *Luftwaffe* on 8 May 1942. Then our artillery opened fire an hour before the start of the attack on identified Russian positions. Shortly before the attack started, the rocket-launcher batteries sent their withering rounds towards the enemy. We then moved out, together with the infantry. Two of our assault guns ran over mines and were immediately disabled. The crews remained calm, however, and did not dismount until the engineers had cleared a lane through the minefield and marked it with tape. The Parpatsch Ditch ran about five kilometers behind the first Russian defensive line. It was a tank ditch about three meters deep with a mound of dirt behind it on the far side. It had been dug out in 1941 by the Russians; it ran about 10 kilometers between the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. By 10 May 1942, the Russians had been encircled in the Parpatsch Position; the *22. Pz.Div.* and other [formations] were already outside of Kerch.The rain arrived on 10 May 1942, however, and everything sank in the muck. As a result of the bad weather, the *Luftwaffe* was ineffective and, as a result, we had to continue the attack on our own along with the infantry. The encircled Russians defended in a desperate manner. Our assault guns still did not have a machine gun at the time. Correspondingly, we fired at the assaulting Russians with high-explosive rounds at pointblank range (30-40 meters). The encirclement did not collapse. After a night of rest, we moved towards Kerch, sometime around 15 May 1942. The remnants of the Russian forces, which practically only had infantry weapons left, held out at Kerch. There were at least 10,000 men at so-called Lighthouse Hill alone. Kerch was taken on 21 May 1942. There was Russian equipment, weapons and materiel everywhere. Among them were horses, some of them still saddled and outfitted with Cossack swords. We held riding lessons several hundred meters away from the fleeing Russians. We engaged the last fleeing Russian forces with a captured Russian 8.5-centimeter antiaircraft cannon. They were attempting to reach the Caucasus shore line with boats and cutters.

2ndPart

Attack on and Capture of Sevastopol (7 June to 4 July 1942)

There was an unbelievable amount of artillery concentrated around the fortress of Sevastopol. Every type of cannon and howitzer was represented; some of them even came from the First World War. The calibers ranged from a 7.5-centimeter infantry gun to the Thor with its 60-centimeter round and the Dora railway gun with its 80-centimeter round. In addition, there were a lot of rocket-launcher batteries. The *Luftwaffe* was operating with *JU 87's* and *Ju 88's* (dive bombers). Our [battalion] was employed against the fortress

form the north. Since we, the *1.*/StuG.Abt. 197, had participated in the winter fighting for the Parpatsch Position and the *2.*/StuG.Abt. 197 had been spared that due to a lack of assault guns, the 2nd Battery was chosen this time to accompany the first wave of the infantry attack on 8 May 1942. The attack began with a powerful artillery preparation at first light. The first rise could be taken relatively quickly, but the Russians really started to put up a heavy defense. There were heavy casualties. By noon, [we] had to relieve our sister battery…before it had reached the objective of the day. While moving forward, we passed an assault gun that had been completely destroyed by a direct hit. The gun had been taken completely apart; the main gun had been flung off to the side. No one had escaped that. We reached Severnaja Bay over the next three weeks in difficult fighting, meter by meter. For the most part, we had to engage the magnificently reinforced dug-outs of the Russians, which were connected with especially deep communications trenches (up to 3 meters deep). Our infantry took heavy casualties, not only from enemy small-arms fire, but also from the Russian artillery, which had been ranged in on every square meter. The practically opaque dense vegetation allowed little in the way of fields of fire for our foot soldiers initially. That changed after a few days, when the bombardment by our aircraft, artillery and rocket launchers tore the vegetation away and practically plowed under the woods.

A few episodes from our operations:
Usually, we moved forward at first light, and we moved back when it started to get dark. While moving back, the engine of our assault gun regularly threatened to quit on a small slope that could be observed by the enemy. The maintenance facility did not find out why until later. Apparently, a [main-gun] round that had slipped out had turned the lever that was behind the loader for the fuel intake. It had closed it so that not enough fuel could flow to the engine when moving uphill. Usually, the assault gun was started using both batteries. Both of them had discharged. We were in the main line of resistance and wanted to start up; nothing happened. To provide ourselves some concealment, we threw out smoke grenades. I dismounted and turned over the engine with the hand crank. In the meantime, the strong odor of the smoke had surrounded the area. The infantry sounded the alert for poison gas. As a precautionary measure, we also put on our gas masks. After 10 minutes it had become clear that the smoke grenades were the culprits. About 15 June 1942, we received a shipment of beer from a brewery in the Ukraine. Not cooled and it was 35 in the shade (95 degrees Fahrenheit). The effect was enormous. The Russian Air Force possessed a few light types of aircraft, which we christened "sewing machines"…due to their type of construction and weak engines. Our *Luftwaffe* dominated the skies during the day, but these "vehicles" came during the night and chugged over our positions and the depots that were filled with ammunition and fuel. Generally, nothing bad happened from these "pains in the neck", but a bomb about the size of a beer bottle hit a truck filled with rocket-launcher ammunition once! The rockets hissed past our heads and detonated nearby. We were completely helpless, and we pressed ourselves, full of fear, into a hole in the ground. Two men from our combat trains were killed and a number were wounded. For a few days, we fetched our water from a valley formed along the extension of Svernaja Bay. It was an open well with a crank as long as a tree. Every time the crank was moved to bring up water, there was hell to pay from the Russian artillery, since it could see at least a portion of the moving crank. The Russians had blown up the fort and the casemates. While conducting reconnaissance of the area, however, our foot soldiers discovered a gigantic wine cellar. Our ammunition haulers unloaded their 7.5-centimeter rounds, and we went to the wine cellar. We loaded our transporters there full to the brim with bottles of wine and the famous Crimean sparkling wine. There was a big orders conference on 1 July 1942. The order for the attack on Sevastopol was issued. Together with the infantry, the assault guns were to engage targets close to the ground; the four-barreled *Flak* would follow behind and engage targets on the upper floors of the buildings. The attack was ordered for 0900 hours. Our assault guns were lined up and the battery officer went to the infantry command post at 0800 hours. He did not return. It turned 0900 hours, then 0930 hours. There was still no sounds of fighting. Finally, the order to move out arrived. In a few minutes, we were on a rise above the shot-up city. Below us was the port with the naval arsenal. It was said that the Russian command had left its forces behind on a submarine; as a result, there was no organized defense for Sevastopol. The war on the Crimea was over for Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197. Since we had received no leave during 1941 and 1942, we now had a week off. The beach and just hanging out along the Black Sea between Yalta and Alutscha: Going in the water, swimming, eating melons, half-ripe grapes, no firing and no duty! Originally, we were supposed to head to Leningrad after Sevastopol. We were loaded on trains at Simferopol; initially, we were employed east of Kursk and then northwest of Woronesch. But there were no large-scale operations there. The *Organization Todt* constructed shelters for us that each held two assault guns. They could be heated, so that the guns were always ready to be employed in the winter. We felled trees for constructing our dugouts and for heating material. In the middle of November 1942, I was sent to the 12th Officer Candidate Course, stopping by the replacement battalion in Schweinfurt first. First to Thorn in France; then from the end of February to the beginning of April 1943 at Mourmelon le Petit in the Champagne region. There were approximately 30 assault-gun people in a class, but they were also combined with officer candidates from the artillery. We were allowed to man captured English guns — it should be noted that those of us who were assault gunners had already fired or experienced the firing of thousands of rounds — learn how to conduct indirect fire from an observation post and all sorts of artillery-related things. The typical training for assault gunners followed

later and lasted until the end of 1943 in Jüterbog. My desire to return to Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197 was not realized. By chance I met up with my old friend Reinhold Schlabs and other acquaintances in April 1945. I had been sent back to my unit — *Heeres-Sturmartillerie-Brigade 261* — as ambulatory wounded from a hospital in Passau. I encountered them at the *Nibelungenwerk*, south of Linz. They had converted from the *1.*/Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197 to schwere Panzerjäger-Abteilung 653. They were picking up the last *Jagdtiger* tank destroyers at the [factory]. I linked up with my own battalion between Melk and St. Pölten on 7 May 1945 and was able to get away from the Russians with it. On 9 May 1945, we ended up in American captivity, which did not last a long time.
[End of first-hand account.]

Diary of Leutnant Werner Preußer, (Headquarters Battery and 1./StuG.Abt. 197)
[*Leutnant* Preußer was the Reconnaissance Platoon Leader in the Headquarters Battery of the Battalion as well, as a Platoon Leader in the 1./StuG.Abt. 197.]

March into Yugoslavia (1941)

Sunday, 6 April 1941: Brieg, Silesia. The first entraining of the heavy vehicles has started. German forces have marched into Yugoslavia and Greece. Will we get there in time?

Monday, 7 April 1941: The Headquarters Battery was loaded on the train in the morning at 0700 hours. Everything was done by 0900 hours. The 1st and 2nd Batteries were then loaded. The entire freight yards at Brieg was swarming with transport trains.

Tuesday, 8 April 1941: The train rolled out of Brieg during the night, at 0230 hours. We did not reach Heydebreck until 0700 hours. The movement continued through Ratibor, Oberberg, Moravian Ostrau, Moravian Weisskirchen, Lundenburg (1700 hours) and Vienna.

Wednesday, 9 April 1941: We moved through Vienna the entire night. Continued through Wiener Neustadt and on to Semmering. The *Flak* train of *Reichsmarschall* Göring was there. We heard at 1400 hours that Saloniki had fallen. We continued through Graz to Wildon. Arrived there around 1900 hours. We detrained. The 1st Battery was already in the vicinity of the border. I went back to Graz with three motorcycle messengers in order to pass on orders to the other batteries.

Thursday, 10 April 1941: Arrival of the 2nd Battery. I passed on the orders after spending a sleepless night in the food kitchen of the Red Cross. The 3rd Battery arrived in the morning at 0700 hours. It had been badly delayed due to a railway accident. I passed on the orders and moved back up front to the battalion. On the way there, *Unteroffizier* Mussler, the machine-gun NCO, had an accident and suffered a broken thigh. I had him sent to a reserve hospital in Graz. Early in the afternoon, I arrived at Ehrenhausen (south of Leibnitz), where quarters have been set up. During the afternoon, I went to Marburg [Maribor] to buy some things. I sent the night in private quarters.

Friday, 11 April 1941: Good Friday. In the afternoon, I scouted a march route to Pettau, going through Mureck. StuG.Abt. 184 was already there. The bridge was not ready yet. Saw the first Yugoslavian prisoners. They were used to help construct the bridge. Went with the [Battalion] Commander in the evening to the regiment. We took off in the night; returned quickly to our quarters.

Saturday, 12 April 1941: Finally departed at noon on the route that had been scouted the previous day. Based on the fact that a heavy howitzer battalion was marching ahead of us, the march proceeded very slowly. It was especially at night that it hardly moved at all.

Sunday, 13 April 1941: Easter. During the day, things started to finally move forward more quickly. I scouted for a rest area beyond the bridge over the Drau, which had been converted from a railway bridge to a provisional traffic bridge. We were finally able to march there early in the afternoon. Later on in the afternoon, the march continued towards the south through wonderful mountain scenery. Once it got dark, things slowed up again, because an artillery battalion had difficulties in negotiating a mountain. After that, however, things proceeded rapidly again. In the meantime, I checked out some hairpin curves for their ability to be negotiated by low boys.

Monday, 14 April 1941: Easter Monday. While I was out, I received orders to return to the battalion, which was resting at the time and had just received orders to march another 80 kilometers. Once I arrived, we moved out again at 0600 hours. We crossed the Save around noon and soon arrived in our new quartering area near Jastrebarsko. Everybody moved into quarters. The scenery and the people here certainly conform to ones previous impressions of the Balkans. They stood along the roads in fantastic peasant dress. When in your quarters, you are looked at as if you are a creature from another planet when you wash up etc. In the evening, we partook of a paprika-spiced chicken and finally got into a real bed and slept until the following morning.

Tuesday, 15 April 1941: In the morning, we moved to Karlovac [Karlstadt], where we received private quarters. My vehicle has a defect in its universal joint and was sent back by me to Novaki and the recovery section. In the evening, as we were just sitting down to some paprika goulash in a large pub, orders to depart suddenly arrived — they summoned us to Otoka on the Una. We were supposed to arrive there the next day at 0600 hours. I went in the [Battalion] Commander's vehicle and was in Otoka the following morning at 0500 hours.

Wednesday, 16 April 1941: We laid down to sleep there. Half an hour later, *Oberleutnant* Gärtner arrived and passed on the order to go back 70 kilometers, where the battalion had taken up quarters. At first light, we could see that we were already right in the middle of Islamic Bosnia. Minarets had taken the place of church towers. After a lot of difficulties, during which the vehicle of the commander also suffered a cracked axle, we finally arrived in the afternoon at the quarters of the battalion. We spent the night there. We had already received the orders to move back to Karlovac the next day. All of the Army elements were being pulled back, since the Yugoslavian Army was as good as done.

Thursday, 17 April 1941: Departed for Karlovac in the morning at 0600 hours, where we arrived in the afternoon and drew quarters.

Friday, 18 April 1941: Had the entire day off. Ceasefire with Yugoslavia at 1200 hours. We had been attached to the *132. Inf.Div.* and the *LI. Armee-Korps* for the entire advance. Usually marching with us were *Mörser-Abteilung 808* and *schwere Feld-Haubitze-Abteilung II/58*. We discovered that we had been attached to *Regiments-Stab 785 z.b.V.* This headquarters, along with another special-purpose headquarters, report directly to the headquarters of the *2. Armee*. On the 20th of this month we are supposed to move back to Graz to be loaded on trains. Where to — no one knows?

Saturday, 19 April 1941: Had the entire day off. We waited for our departure, which is now supposed to take place at Villach.

Sunday, 20 April 1941: The *Führer's* birthday. Departure in the morning as far as Podloz, using the same route that we arrived on. From there through Bistrica to a village outside of Marburg, where we drew quarters for the night.

Monday, 21 April 1941: Continued moving in the morning at 1000 hours. We crossed the Drau at Marburg; then moved through Mahrenberg, Unterdrauburg and across the German border as far as the village of Ruden, 36 kilometers outside of Klagenfurt. Starting at Marburg, the road paralleled the Drau. We were presented with constantly changing, magnificent scenery. After crossing the border, the Karawanken Range soon came into sight off to the left of the road. Its highest peaks were still covered in snow. We drew quarters for the night in Ruden.

Tuesday, 22 April 1941: Continued to march in the morning through Klagenfurt to Villach. Magnificent Lake Wörth was to the left of the march route, surrounded by the Karawanken. The road is once again a terrific asphalt surface. In the morning, at 0700 hours, I sent three telegrams from comrades and from myself from Klagenfurt with the request that we be sent money. We drew quarters in Villach. We stayed in the *Hotel Post*.

Tuesday, 29 April 1941: We climbed the *Dobratsch* in the Villach Alps with a portion of the Headquarters

Battery. It is the highest mountain in the vicinity of Villach. Fabulous weather. There was still deep snow after crossing the tree line. 4.5 hours ascent; 2 hours descent.

2 May 1941: Took the cable car to the *Kanzel* ["pulpit"]; from there, ascended the *Görlitz* on foot (1911 meters). Terrific view of the Julisch Alps and the *Hohe Tauern*. You could even see the *Großglockner*.

Monday, 5 May 1941: Went with the Battery Commander and the Battalion Physician to Weissensee. The Battery Commander visited a few people there he knew from vacations. Terrific scenery. A view of the *Hohe Tauern*. Great view of the Julisch Alps on the way back through Gail Valley.

Wednesday, 7 May 1941: Loaded on the train at 0100 hours. Departed at 0545 hours through Bruck an der Mur, Semmering, Wiener Neustadt and Vienna.

Thursday, 8 May 1941: Continued moving through Brünn, Zwittau, Bohemian Tribau, Geiersberg and Mittelwalde to Rengersdorf (near Glatz). We detrained there at approximately 1930 hours. From there, we moved to Glatz, where we drew quarters in a military facility. Three weeks in Glatz (the nicest time of my life).

Thursday, 29 May 1941: Started to load o the train in Rengersdorf in the evening at 2000 hours. Departed the main train station of Glatz around 2300 hours. Moved all night through:

Friday, 30 May 1941: Kamenz, Neiße, Ratibor, Oderberg, Dziedzitz, Auschwitz and Rzeszow. We unloaded there. Following that, we moved 60 kilometers to the north as far as Kreszow. We were supposed to spend the night there. No quarters were to be had there. We only got a loaf of Army bread in one of the barracks. There were large-scale troop movements in progress to the east. The rumors all contradicted onte another. We still did not know what was going to happen with Russia. While moving, we saw field airstrips and camouflaged forces, who only marched at night.

Saturday, 31 May 1941: Continued to move in the morning at 0800 hours through Bilgoraj and Zamosc to the village of Turkowice (near Hrubieszow). The Headquarters Battery drew quarters near a Polish and Russian convent as well as an orphanage. For the most part, we stayed in tents. The roadways are in such shape that you are fearful of not getting out in the event of bad weather. The scenery where we are located is quite nice. Based on the current nice weather, we feel like we could hold out here for several weeks. Two weeks of peaceful existence in Turkowice.

Monday, 16 June 1941: Departed in the morning at 0600 hours. We were brought forward to a patch of woods not too far from the Russian border. We have been attached to the *57. Inf.Div*. Moved through Tyszowce, Czerkazy, Poturzyn and Warez as far as a patch of woods near the village of Moszkow. We pitched out tents there. The mood was muted. We were all in agreement that if there were to be a war with Russia we would all lose our faith in our leadership. Towards evening I went to the border at Belz so as to send a telegram; it appeared our mail was being held up along the way. A few days in tentage, whereby our mood was not exactly rosy.

Saturday, 21 June 1941: It was now almost certain that there would be war with Russia. The exhortation of the *Führer* was read aloud to the soldiers. Based on his fabulous justification, we are again on fire for what must be done and look to the future with calm. That evening, we all moved into assembly areas or the command post. I had to drive around the entire night, since the attack was supposed to start at 0315 hours. There was no thought of sleep.

The Campaign Against Russia 1941

Sunday, 22 June 1941: I experienced an attack first hand for the first time this morning. The city of Sokal was lying peacefully at our feet until, all at once, and right at the established time, the guns of the artillery let loose. The rocket launchers were truly something special and, at the same time, eerie to experience. At

first, they gave us a fright. Not to mention a gigantic shock to the enemy._During the morning, I stayed at the regimental command post, which was constantly moving forward and where I had the wonderful opportunity to observe the advance of the infantry, the coordination among the arms and the employment of the assault artillery, which was proving itself in a magnificent manner._Occasionally, we wound up in machine-gun and rifle fire; during the afternoon, there was also some seemingly widely scattered enemy artillery fire. In the evening, we reached the road from Tartakow to the south and dug in there for the night. One battery lost a *Wachtmeister*, shot in the head. *Leutnant* Zafer was wounded.

Monday, 23 June 1941: The attack continued in the morning at 0400 hours. We proceeded through Torke, where a lunch break was taken, and then as far as Brany. During the morning, I brought the 2nd Battery forward. During the afternoon, we worked with the advance guards, to which our assault guns had been attached. We moved along with the regimental command post in heavy storms as far as Brany. We encountered an abandoned estate building, where Russian artillery had set up. We saw some Russian commissars who had been taken prisoner there. We slept in a building at a train station

Tuesday, 24 June 1941: Departed in the direction of Lobaczewkw at 0800 hours. From there, I moved around in the rear of the sector of *Inf.Rgt. 202* (*75. Inf.Div.*) to the 1st Battery, with which I was supposed to establish contact. In the afternoon, I returned to the battalion command post. *Leutnant* Ulbricht had been slightly wounded. We had reached the Styr.

Wednesday, 25 June 1941: During the evening of 24 June 1941, I went back to the *LV. Armee-Korps* in Druzkopol, where I had to clarify an unclear order, and returned to the battalion command post at first light. In the morning, we proceeded on towards Holatyn-Dolny. We were attached to the *75. Inf.Div.*, which was part of the *LV. Armee-Korps* along with the *168. Inf.Div*. We saw a series of bombs being dropped by the Russians at some distance. I went back and forth between Dolny and Boremel several times. In the evening, the orders to move out arrived suddenly. However we only pulled forward as far as Boremel, where we spent the night in the vehicles.

Thursday, 26 June 1941: Early in the morning, we continued on, moving over an engineer bridge and an embankment across the Styr. Then, further through Chriniki, Lopawsze, Kniahinin and Bokujna to just outside of Smordwa. Was up front in the morning at 0800 hours with the regimental commander. The Russians flew in with strong forces and dropped bombs along a supply route with some success. The objective of the day for the regiment was Dubno. It turned out, however, that we did not need to get there after all, since friendly tank elements had penetrated up to there from the southwest and also from the northwest. The headquarters of an armored division was already in Dubno. The battalion on the left, with the platoons of *Leutnant* Spielmann and *Leutnant* Wollermann, had taken part in heavy fighting. *Leutnant* Wollermann was killed and *Leutnant* Spielmann was slightly wounded. We slept in a small, primitive barn. In the evening, two stragglers were apprehended.

Friday, 27 June 1941: Quiet the entire day. The Headquarters Battery moved up again. There were continuous reports of Russians breaking through to the rear among the logistics elements. The *Wehrmacht* Daily Report announced that decisive successes had been achieved, whose announcement will be imminent. Our advance is now supposed to turn south. We are assuming that it's for the Lemberg Pocket.

Saturday, 28 June 1941: We turned south. Our departure was delayed at noon by a severe rainstorm. Three Russian fighters flew over us. It was not until evening that our motorized march group got rolling. The route headed back through Bokujna, then through Ostrow on the tank trail to the southeast towards Kozin. I spent the night in the vehicle a few kilometers outside of Kozin.

Sunday, 29 June 1941: At first light, I scouted out assembly area near Kozin, which we occupied during the first few morning hours. I moved forward to the division once. In the afternoon, there was an enemy dive-bomber attack (biplane), which strafed us with machine-gun fire. There were continuous rumors of groups of straggling Russians, so we sent out a few patrols. They returned without finding anything. We set up outposts during the night to screen us.

Monday, 30 June 1941: We moved up as far as Zabow. We set up in a cottage in the woods there. During

the noon hour, I went back to Boremel, where the maintenance section was still located. I took the march route to it. In the evening, I went forward to the division in Poczajow Nowy and then returned.

Tuesday, 1 July 1941: Early in the morning, we moved forward to Poczajow Nowy, where we set up in some woods. I established contact with the division. Using this opportunity, we visited a gigantic cloister, which had been constructed in an ornate style and had a fantastic location. I determined, much to my surprise, that an orthodox church was even more ornate than a Roman Catholic one. In the afternoon, I moved forward to the front. A burning tank was on the road; it had been knocked out an hour previous to that by our antitank guns. I ran into the commander of *Inf.Rgt. 202*, *Oberstleutnant* Block, again. The objective of the day, the Kremenec — Wisniowiec road, had been reached. I went to the 1st Battery, which was in an assembly area, and took some paperwork back with me to the battalion. We spent the night in tents.

Wednesday, 2 July 1941: In the morning at 0400 hours, a scout section and I looked for a rest area for the Headquarters Battery and the Battle Staff. I took the northern part of Kuniniec — Wielki. There was still infantry fighting going on close by so that I checked with the division first concerning the situation. The headquarters Battery arrived a short while later. The Battle Staff also came later. One platoon of the 2nd Battery had been encircled by the Russians near Katrynburg and had to be relieved. The battery had destroyed a Russian ammunition column and assorted tanks. It was intended for the battalion to be assembled and placed at the disposal of the *LV. Armee-Korps*. I went to the *57. Inf.Div.* so as to pick up the 3rd Battery there. The Division Operations Officer refused to release the battery, however, and I went to the corps' [reported] location, but it had not arrived yet. On the way, I encountered the Battalion Commander, who would get a positive answer from the *General*. In the evening, I went to Wisniowiec, where the *57. Inf. Div.* had set up in a large palace in the meantime. However, I was unable to achieve anything there again. I spent the night on a bed of straw.

Thursday, 3 July 1941: Went to Wisniowiec at noon in order to check a bridge over the Horyn. Later went to Katrynburg, where we looked over the battlefield where the 2nd Battery fought the previous day. A scene of horror, the likes of which I have never seen before. In the evening, I went to the *57. Inf.Div.* once again in order to get an orientation concerning the situation.

Friday, 4 July 1941: I departed in the morning at 0730 hours so as to conduct a route reconnaissance to our new assembly area. While doing so, we ran into some straggling Russian forces. Due to the heavy rain, I got stuck six times and, as a result, did not reach the battalion until it was around evening. In the meantime, it had moved to Wierzbowiec. We spent the night on straw in a school. Because it had rained the entire day, the unimproved roads were in an unbelievable condition. It was said that we were at the disposal of the *XXXXIV. Armee-Korps*.

Saturday, 5 July 1941: Continued the march in the morning at 0800 hours. We moved part of the way along a railway line as far as Wlaszczynze, where we set up for the night in a school again. The batteries assembled in the woods next to the village. In the afternoon, I discussed matters with the corps. The topic was primarily fuel.

Sunday, 6 July 1941: The order arrived during the night at 0300 hours to pull forward. We had been attached to *Inf.Rgt. 36* of the *9. Inf.Div.* of the *XXXXIV. Armee-Korps*. We departed at 0700 hours and arrived at Bialozorka around 0830 hours. It was there that the infantry was supposed to move out at 0900 hours. I went back to orient the wheeled vehicles. Fortunately, I ran into the Battery Commander in Wlaszczynze, so that I was spared a longer trip. On the way back, I had problems with the carburetor, so that I did not arrive at the regimental command post until the afternoon. It was already located on the far side of the former Russian border. The old border had been fortified with half-finished but fabulously camouflaged bunkers and field positions as well as tank ditches. However, everything had been abandoned in this sector. In the small town of Bazalja, we captured a Russian antitank-gun ammunition trailer and took a small stray dog with us as a mascot. It was not until it had turned dark that we got close to the objective of the day. We spent the night in a school in the village of Borszczowka.

Monday, 7 July 1941: We continued in the morning at 0900 hours through Klitenka-Mala and Wolica-Wasowicz as far as the area around Pilipy. From there, I escorted the Division Commander back for a while. I got stuck following that and was pulled out by the Battalion Commander. After a powerful rainstorm, I

went back to the Headquarters Battery. No contact with the enemy. The weather was wet and cold, and we slept in the orderly room vehicle.

Tuesday, 8 July 1941: In the morning, at 0600 hours, moved through Kulczyny to Kulczynki, where *Inf. Rgt. 36* was located; in the afternoon, further on to Lahodynce, where the *9. Inf.Div.* was. I then went to *Inf. Rgt. 57* to check out the situation and render a report to the Division Commander. There was talk of a large tank attack, but it turned out to be the *9. Pz.Div*. Unfortunately, it was engaged by friendly antitank guns. Later on, moved through Kuzmin and Woronkowce to Hryhorowka (near Starokonstantynow). We went there to *Inf.Rgt. 36*, where the 2nd Battery was employed. The 3rd Battery, which was employed in support of the *57. Inf.Div.*, had one gun that was a total loss. After several hits from an antitank gun, it flew into the air. The crew was able to save itself. *Leutnant* Becker was badly wounded: a round through the knee and shrapnel in the back. In the evening, we went back to Lahodynce and slept once again in the orderly room vehicle.

Wednesday, 9 July 1941. In the morning, at 1000 hours, we initially moved through Rosolowce to Antoniny, in order to visit *Leutnant* Becker at the main aid station. The infantry had the day off. Following that, we went to Czerniatyn-Wielki, where the exploded assault gun was located. The entire superstructure, including the main gun, had flown off. There were still some wounded Russians laying around, whom our doctor treated. Following that, we went to Starokonstantynow and the 2nd and 3rd Batteries; we stayed with the Headquarters Battery. During the afternoon, we explored the Russian military facilities and the arsenal. Not much booty taken. Slept in the orderly room vehicle in the evening.

Thursday, 10 July 1941: Got a good night's sleep. Walked around, since we had not been pulled forward. After lunch, went for a splash in Lake Kuzmin for a second time. I was sent back to the maintenance section in the afternoon at 1600 hours to bring it forward. In the evening, there was a terrible cloudburst, which transformed all of the roads into rivers. After we got stuck for the second time around 2200 hours and spent hours trying to get free, we went to sleep.

Friday, 11 July 1941: We started out work again at 0600 hours and finally got out around 1100 hours, after we had gotten stuck another two times. We moved without serious incident through Katrynburg and then on to Kuniniec-Wielki, using the improved surface road. We arrived there at 1600 hours. Exactly 24 hours after we had departed. The stretch was about 160 kilometers. My vehicle had the most important things maintained on it. In the evening, we had some peace and quiet.

Saturday, 12 July 1941: After the vehicle was fit for driving again, we went back at 0800 hours and took a route that bypassed the original route of advance. The advance route was in terrible condition. We arrived at the Headquarters Battery at 1800 hours. It had moved forward through Krasniolka to Sachnowce (outskirts) in the meantime. At 2000 hours, we continued on towards Ostropol. The route was hard to find, since the maps were becoming increasingly unreliable the further we advanced into Russia. We set up at a field encampment at Ostropol. We found out that the Stalin Line had been penetrated during the last few days.

Sunday, 13 July 1941: The day was spent quietly, since the division was also not conducting operations. The 2nd Battery had to engage bunkers in the sector of the *297. Inf.Div.* on the right, so that our batteries were distributed among three divisions. In the evening, at 2000 hours, I went forward to the division, which had changed locations in the meantime to Mszaniec. I then moved back in the darkness along very bad roads, arriving at the battalion after a few minor incidents.

Monday, 14 July 1941: My vehicle had to go back to the maintenance section in order to havenew front shocks installed. The commander's vehicle was also disabled, so that *Oberleutnant* Gärtner and I rode in the signals vehicle. The Battalion Commander rode in the vehicle of the battalion liaison officer. We went to the division headquarters at Mszaniec. The situation was fairly intense due to the heavy enemy resistance. *Oberleutnant* Fuhr was wounded. The *9. Inf.Div.* was also not making progress, since the *297. Inf.Div.* was not advancing. If it attempted to do so, the threat to the flanks would be too great.

Tuesday, 15 July 1941: Continued to advance through Biszowa, Mazepince and Salnica, starting at noon.

Took a mid-day break at Skarzynce. The sectors have been changed. Despite the strong resistance, the enemy was ejected and was in the process of pulling back. The *297. Inf.Divi.*, on the right, has now moved up even with the *IV. Armee-Korps*, which adjoins us on the right. This resulted in the 2nd battery coming back to the *9. Inf.Div*. Continued through Salnica to Ulanow in the afternoon, where we called it a day. We saw the first blown-up bridges there; but they had been demolished in a very deficient manner. The numbers of prisoners who march past us grows ever greater.

Wednesday, 16 July 1941: Continued marching around noon through Woronince towards Luznia and Rogince, where we had to wait out a powerful cloudburst for several hours. The infantry continued to march on, unshaken. Following the cloudburst, we continued on completely softened roadways to Lemeschewka, where the division was located. We set up housekeeping in a small farmer's house. In the evening, I went through Rajki to the area around Nemirinzy. I passed on the report to *Oberleutnant* Brinke that the 1st Battery was supposed to report to *Infanterie-Regiment 57*. That afternoon, it had fought together with the reconnaissance battalion for Sloboda Nowina and Wujna. Spent the night sleeping in a bed.

Thursday, 17 July 1941: I went to the *57. Inf.Div.* in the morning, while it was quiet in the corps sector, in order to visit the 3rd Battery. I went as far as Machnowka, where the division was supposed to go, and discovered over the telephone, where the 3rd Battery was. I ran into elements of *Panzergruppe von Kleist* again. There were a number of captured guns and tanks in Machnowka. I linked up with the 3rd Battery at Krysnanowka, which had nothing new to report. I then went back to the battle staff. The Headquarters Battery still was not there. The next day is also supposed to be quiet as well, since no vehicles were getting through at all with the muck the way it is now.

Friday, 18 July 1941: Day of rest. Using simple means, we prepared ourselves something to eat. It was raining a lot outside.

Saturday, 19 July 1941: In the afternoon , at 1400 hours, I went back with *Oberleutnant* Liedtke to the Headquarters Battery, which we were unable to find even after a foot march of an hour after our vehicle got stuck at Ulanow. We later rested on a roof.

Sunday, 20 July 1941: We got up in the morning at 0600 hours. Quite by chance, we ran into the headquarters Battery after all. We took the Commander's vehicle and went to the location of our stuck vehicle. With the assistance of a heavy prime mover from the artillery, we were able to pull our vehicle out. After a few minor incidents, we got back to Lemeschewka, where the doctor [battalion physician] had remained behind, all by himself. A short while later, the Commander also showed up. We were finally pulled out of the line and were supposed to initially assemble in Machnowka. We headed in that direction, moving through Berditschew, where a lot of captured items were still lying about. The city itself had suffered a lot. On the way there, we cannibalized seven leaf springs from an abandoned German vehicle. My vehicle could finally be brought up to snuff again.

Monday, 21 July 1941: Departed in the morning at 0400 hours on the main supply route back to the maintenance section, taking march orders to it in Ostropol and getting my vehicle operational again in Starokonstantynow. Arrived at the maintenance section in the afternoon. My vehicle is running again. Finally had the opportunity to sleep on a soft surface again (mattress) in the rations truck.

Tuesday, 22 July 1941: Departed in the morning at 0400 hours. Initially through Ulanow, where I picked up the motorcycle messengers and a few vehicles. The Headquarters Battery was already gone. We then proceeded on to Machnowka. I found the entire battalion there. During the noon hour and in the afternoon, I enjoyed the peaceful quiet of a cool day.

Wednesday, 23 July 1941: The battalion departed in the morning at 0400 hours. The 3rd Battery had already departed the previous evening. We moved through Berditschew on an asphalted road in the direction of Shitomir. The city is fairly large and, with the exception of the destruction, makes a good impression. From Shitomir, we headed east on the road to Kiev as far as Brussilow. The *LV. Armee-Korps* was there. We then went on to Juroff and Kopijewka. The Headquarters Battery set up there. Shortly after we had arrived, the Russian artillery fired some harassment fire that kept up at irregular intervals. Went to the *111. Inf.Div.* at noon, where the battalion command post was located (north of Sawalowka). During the afternoon, the

battalion command post moved forward to Makaroff. The headquarters Battery was moved forward there. I went to the division at Lipowka, where I received a mission for the 2nd Battery. I then spent the night there.

Thursday, 24 July 1941: There was another mission for the battalion in the morning. *Oberleutnant* Gärtner relieved me and I went back to the battalion around noon. A front line has been established oriented towards the north with infantry regiments 50, 70, 117, 217 and 417. With the exception of small local operations, the intent today was only to defend. The *296. Inf.Div.*, which is coming from the north, was supposed to close the pocket around Kiev. The *268. Inf.Div.* is off to our right. For the third time in a few days, there was mail again.

Friday, 25 July 1941: The whole day was quiet. The 3rd Battery participated very successfully in a local operation conducted by *Inf.Rgt. 117*. Today there was once again ungodly amounts of mail. We could see from the newspapers, photo weeklies, radio and letters, that the assault artillery was enjoying constantly increasing popularity.

Saturday, 26 July 1941: The whole day was quiet. The 3rd Battery participated in another operation. An enemy attack was successfully turned back.

Sunday, 27 July 1941: I received a terrain reconnaissance mission in the morning. Check out bridges that are suitable for assault guns for a possible attack. I was back in the forward lines again. I was received by heavy artillery fire. I had barely moved away from the building where my vehicle had been when it was visited by an artillery barrage. In the evening, I went to the 1st Battery to clear up some questions. We observed the firing of railway artillery there. When it turned dark, I checked out a route in front of the enemy combat outposts that, according to the map, was supposed to be marshy. It turned out to be negotiable, however. I went back to the division and to the battalion and laid down to sleep in my hammock. Slight stomachache.

Monday, 28 July 1941: Quiet day. The *296. Inf.Div.* was preparing for an attack on 30 July 1941.

Tuesday, 29 July 1941: Continued quiet. The batteries established contact with the attacking regiments (520 and 521) and the battalion with the *296. Inf.Div.* Towards evening, the battle staff changed positions, moving to the vicinity of the division command post in Naliwajkowka.

Wednesday, 30 July 1941: The batteries participated in the attack. We lost a few guns through artillery and mines. One dead man, who jumped on a mine. Several wounded. The attack objectives were taken.

Thursday, 31 July 1941: In the morning, I went to the maintenance section, which had arrived in the meantime, and had a rear shock absorber replaced. The battle staff moved again, several kilometers more to the front. The friendly lines have been moved further forward. The enemy appears to have disengaged. *Leutnant* Zäfer came back.

Friday, 1 August 1941: Changed positions in the morning to Sabujanje, where we got a nice, shady little spot. Since the continued attacks have to be carried out primarily in wooded terrain, our guns have been held back. At lunch, I went back to the location of the corps, in order to turn in a teletype message with requests for replacements. Got some terrific cherries on the way there.

Saturday, 2 August 1941: I went along with the crew of my vehicle to Shitomir in the morning to have us deloused. In the morning, in addition to all sorts of bedbugs and the fleas, which have been present for a long time, I also discovered a louse in my trousers. In the evening, following the procedure, we went to the front-line movies. There was the latest weekly newsreel and a movie. We went back to the battalion command post in the evening.

Sunday, 3 August 1941: All of the attached formations have been released from attachment. We will report directly to the *LV. Armee-Korps*. Went back to Makaroff, where the battalion was assembling for a rest. Operations will transition to the defense in our former sector. A local-area military commander has already been established in Makaroff.

4-7 August 1941: Rest and refitting in Makaroff.

Friday, 8 August 1941: We were moved into the area of operations of the *LV. Armee-Korps* and marched to Wassilkow. Since we were not needed there yet, we were directed to the village of Plisezkoje, where we set up.

Saturday, 9 August 1941: I went to Shitomir to pick up Inspector Nebel. I came back in the evening. Suddenly, the order arrived that we had been attached to the *XXIX. Armee-Korps*. I went with *Oberleutnant* Liedtke to Putrowka, where the corps was located. We were supposed to move up there the next day.

Sunday, 10 August 1941: Departed in the morning at 0500 hours. I finally received a map, where you can properly orient yourself. Unfortunately, it was only for the area around Kiev. Just outside of Glewacha, we discovered that the originally intended march route was not trafficable. We detoured the other vehicles. Suddenly, out of the clear blue skies, there were two large attacks by bombers on the full road. With a lot of luck, we were able to escape them. The bombs impacted all around us; the *Flak* was firing and the antiaircraft machine guns were rattling away. While continuing on to Jankowitschi, a squadron of Russian biplane dive bombers approached us. They left us unscathed, however. We set up for the night in Jankowitschi. I checked out a bridge a few kilometers in front of us. After a few hours, an order arrived stating that we had been reattached to the *LV. Armee-Korps*. The battle staff went to Wassilkow, but the corps was no longer there. We received good information from elements that had remained behind, where the corps had moved. I went back to fetch the battalion. I then moved on ahead on the march route with the doctor. We went through Wassilkow to the south in the direction of Malaja Oljschanka. On the way, we experienced another Russian dive-bomber attack, but we were able to brake in time. There was a badly wounded man among the corps logistics elements. We set up quarters in a school in Malaja Oljschanka.

Monday, 11 August 1941: In the morning, I went to *Inf.Rgt. 438* of the *132. Inf.Div.* and to our Yugoslavian division, which, along with the *294. Inf.Div.*, is employed to the left of us and has been attached to the *LV. Armee-Korps*. The current mission of the corps is to support *Gruppe Schwedler*, which is south of us, by clearing the area south of Kiev. I went through Kargarlyk, where *Gruppe Schwedler* is located, to Janowka, where *Inf. Rgt. 438* is located and discussed with the regimental commander his intent for the upcoming attack. I got back by noon and rendered a report. In the afternoon, I went to the *LV. Armee-Korps* at Germanowka. I was briefed by the corps on the situation and received orders that attached us to the *132. Inf.Div.* The initial intent was to clear the enemy bridgeheads in the sector of the *132. Inf.Div.* Following that, we were to clear the bridgeheads further north in the sector of the *294. Inf.Div.* The attack was to take place on 15 August 1941.

Tuesday, 12 August 1941: I moved on ahead early in the morning in order to scout the route to the *132. Inf.Div.* We were supposed to go to the area around Kagarlyk; we had picked the village of Peresselennije from the map. The best buildings in the village had already been occupied by *Gruppe Schwedler*, however, since the group was moving out of Kagarlyk due to the heavy Russian bomber attacks. The batteries remained in Peresselennije, while I looked for quarters for the headquarters in Kagarlyk. In the evening, I went to the *132. Inf.Div.* in Jusefowka. After a few kilometers, the linkage pins fell out. It was lucky that we were moving slowly at the time. I then carried out my mission with the air-defense vehicle.

Wednesday, 13 August 1941: Around noon, we received orders that we were to be moved south to the *9. Inf.Div.* We were supposed to support an important attack on Kanew there, since the Russians were very strong there. It took all day to repair my vehicle. As a result, I was unable to depart for Lasurzy, about 50-60 kilometers east/southeast, until at approximately 1800 hours. I did not arrive there until 2130 hours. Prior to that, I mistakenly went to the 1st Battery, where there was a lot of artillery activity. In the distance, you could see tracer rounds from heavy machine guns. There was a lot happening there!

Thursday, 14 August 1941: Intense *Stuka* attacks. The friendly attack was only with one regiment.

Friday, 15 August 1941: The attack on Kanew started in the morning at 0400 hours. Once again, intense *Stuka* attacks. Our attack only progressed very slowly due to the large amount of mines. A gun of the 2nd Battery ran over a mine; the same thing happened to the gun of *Oberleutnant* Brinke. But there were no personnel casualties. *Leutnant* Ulbricht was badly wounded; *Leutnant* Spielmann slightly.

Saturday, 16 August 1941: Enemy bomber attacks fairly close by during the night. In the morning, I went with *Oberleutnant* Gärtner's vehicle to a point where I had radio contact with the batteries and the battalion. From there, you had a very good view of the terrain along the Dnjepr. Once again, there was a gun from the 2nd Battery that ran over a mine. Practically all of the roadwheels were defective and four wounded. In the evening, a gun ran over a mine on a road that had been reported as being clear of mines.

Sunday, 17 August 1941: Went to Dratschi in the morning and looked for quarters for the battalion. Following that, looked for the command post of *Inf.Rgt. 438*, which was located right in front of Rshishew. Then back to the battalion. Shortly before noon, went forward again to put up signposts and reinforce a bridge. During the afternoon, honey in huge quantities was "captured" using a gas mask, helmet and a shelter half as a protective suit.

Monday, 18 August 1941: We are the corps reserve, reporting to the *132. Inf.Div.* for command and control purposes. I went to the division command post at Kagarlykskaja Ssloboda. A few orders were passed on with vehicles and motorcycle messengers. We set up home in a Russian hut. The people here are very clean.

Tuesday, 19 August 1941: I was ordered back to the battalion at noon. We had just been attached to the *294. Inf.Div.* of the *LV. Armee-Korps*.

Wednesday, 20 August 1941: We laid about the entire day at a magnificent location. The entire battalion had the day off.

Thursday, 21 August 1941: Continued quiet. The battalion has established a single battery under the command of *Oberleutnant* Brinke out of the six remaining guns. This battery is supposed to participate in the attack on the Tripolje bridgehead, which has been set for 23 August 1941.

Friday, 22 August 1941: In the morning, we march back along our former route of advance to Mirowka, where the remainder of the battalion established quarters. The 1st Battery has already moved into the vicinity of its attack positions.

Saturday, 23 August 1941: The 1st Battery participated in the fighting for the enemy bridgehead at Tripolje, which, for the most part, has been taken. The battery officer vehicle ran over a mine; total loss.

Sunday, 24 August 1941: All of Tripolje taken. In the afternoon, I went back to Makarow to the maintenance section in order to discuss the departure. I arrived back in the evening at 2000 hours. The battalion has been allocated to the *17. Armee* (*XI. Armee-Korps*) and is supposed to move to Fedwar in the vicinity of Kirowograd.

Monday, 25 August 1941: Day of rest. Scouted bridges in Boguslaw.

Tuesday, 26 August 1941: The battalion marched to its intermediate quarters in Swenigorodka. I went ahead to put up signposts. Arrived around noon.

Wednesday, 27 August 1941: Continued to march via Slatopol to Fedwar (near Kirowograd).

Thursday, 28 August 1941: We have been directed to support the *125. Inf.Div.* Continued to move to Worobjowka (in the vicinity of Krementschug).

Friday, 29 August 1941: We pulled a few more kilometers ahead as far as Mironowka with the headquarters, the 1st Battery and the 2nd Battery.

Saturday, 30 August 1941: It was the doctor's birthday, which we celebrated with a bottle of *Kroatsbeere*. In the afternoon, the Battalion Commander finally decided to send me to the 1st Battery as a Platoon Leader. My driver, including the vehicle, has also been transferred there to be the Battery Officer driver and vehicle. I went to the 1st Battery. Right now, my platoon consists of a single gun! Another one is expected in the next few days, however.

Sunday, 31 August 1941: Took a look at my platoon. Day of rest.

Monday, 1 September 1941: Day of rest. We're supposed to cross the Dnjepr tomorrow. We are supposed to form the advance guard.

Tuesday, 2 September 1941: We pulled up as far as Onufrjewka and went to the Dnjepr in the afternoon to take a look at the crossing traffic. The 2nd and 3rd batteries were in the process of crossing. In the evening, we pulled forward to Krjukow on the Dnjepr and spent the night there.

Wednesday, 3 September 1941: In the morning, we pulled forward to the loading area and were transported across at 1400 hours. We spent the night at the regimental command post of *Inf.Rgt. 419*.

Thursday, 4 September 1941: We have been attached to the *101. leichte Infanterie-Division* and moved to Fedri. I scouted a route for the trains. The Russians made bombing runs on the columns. We spent the night in Fedri.

Friday, 5 September 1941: We were attached to *Inf.Rgt. 229* in the morning and moved up to Prisl(k?). At noon, we were attached to *Inf.Rgt. 228* and moved through Lawrikowka to Jeristowka. We attacked in the direction of Mischtschenki, moving through Karabaschi. Countless Russians were taken out in the process. In the evening, we pulled back to Jeristowka, but were to remain on call for the division.

Saturday, 6 September 1941: Spent the day quietly. Late in the afternoon, we pulled forward to the *125. Inf.Div.*, which was supposed to attack across the Psjoll. In the evening, the Battery Commander was wounded near the railway bridge that was being prepared for our crossing. Heavy enemy artillery fire at some distance.

Sunday, 7 September 1941: We crossed over the bridge early in the morning. The artillery fire had let up. We moved to the location of the *III./Inf.Rgt. 419*, which was outside of Jariny. From there, we were sent to *Aufklärungs-Abt. 125* at Romanki. We conducted an attack together with a bicycle troop, during which about 200 prisoners were taken. The enemy suffered heavy losses in killed and wounded. The Battery Commander received a hit from an antitank gun on his vehicle. Three crewmembers were slightly wounded. Another operation late in the afternoon with the *III./Inf.Rgt. 419*. The village we attacked proved to be clear of the enemy, however. Another operation started as it turned dusk; it did not yield any results. In the evening, we set up at the Omjelnik train stop.

Monday, 8 September 1941: Attacked Wanshuli and Jariny in the morning at 0830 hours and then on to the next patch of high ground. No enemy. We observed enemy artillery off to the flank, which we engaged at long range. Unfortunately, an enemy artillery round impacted close by while we were rearming. *Unteroffizier* Flintrop and *Unteroffizier* Kleeden were badly wounded. *Kanonier* Lipp, in the ammo section, was killed. *Unteroffizier* Dorsch took over command of the "C" Gun. The gunner became *Unteroffizier* hacker. The gunner in the "D" Gun was *Unteroffizier* Skodell. In the evening, I went with the Battery Commander to the

battalion. The Battalion Commander had been wounded a week ago, and the battalion is under the acting command of *Oberleutnant* Goewe.

Tuesday, 9 September 1941: During the morning, we conducted a leaders' recon northwest of Wanshuli in two command and control vehicles. There was an attack at noon on Litwinenki and Bordjugi, together with the infantry. Fairy strong enemy resistance. A troop from the reconnaissance battalion approached us from the other side. We had the Russians in the trap and destroyed large quantities of materiel again. When it turned dark, we went back to Wanshuli.

Wednesday, 10 September 1941: Heavy rainfall. All operations were called off. I had a pretty bad stomach ache.

Thursday, 11 September 1941: Continued rainy weather. One again, no operations took place.

Friday, 12 September 1941: Attack on Omjelnik in the morning at 0900 hours. Initially, the enemy put up heavy resistance. After about an hour, while firing on fleeing Russians with the machine gun, I was hit by a round with a steel core that penetrated the helmet and inflicted two surface wounds to the head that bled profusely. The doctor dressed me immediately and sent me back to the trains. The Battalion Physician looked at the wounds there. I will have to remain with the trains for the time being, at least until I can wear a steel helmet again.

Saturday, 13 September 1941: The battalion has been attached to the *LV. Armee-Korps*. The 2nd and 3rd Batteries to the *57. Inf.Div.* and the 1st Battery to the *100. le.Inf.Div.* We marched back over the Psjoll Bridge, through the former sector of the *101. le. Inf.Div.* and as far as the area of a small village. We bivouacked there in the open, since all of the villages were overflowing.

Sunday, 14 September 1941: Established contact in the morning. Attacked at 1400 hours. The platoons were distributed between two regiments. We destroyed 18 enemy guns. This means that today was one of the most successful in the course of the campaign.

Monday, 15 September 1941: It appears that one vehicle and one motorcycle messenger have fallen into the hands of the enemy? We changed positions twice. The last time to Anrejki. *Unteroffizier* Adam, a vehicle driver, was badly wounded when opening up a destroyed Russian tank by a Russian who was still sitting inside.

Tuesday, 16 September 1941: We moved forward as far as Markowo with the trains. In the afternoon, I went to the battalion to have my wounds dressed. Our Battery Officer's vehicle burned out.

Wednesday, 17 September 1941: We moved forward with the trains through Leman to Ploskoje. The "C" Gun ran over a mine. The track and the drive sprocket were damaged. I ran into Spielmann's platoon, which was screening.

Thursday, 18 September 1941: We stayed in Pleskoje, because the avenue of advance is still mined in some places. In the afternoon, I went to the battalion to have my wounds dressed. The *57. Inf.Div.* moved into Poltawa.

Friday, 19 September 1941: Changed positions and moved to Masurowka, not too far from the Poltawa — Reschetilowka road. I went to the battalion, which had also gone to Poltawa in the meantime. I picked up an issue of ammunition there. The city had little damage. There were numerous Soviet tanks everywhere. The city itself presents the usual image — dirty and run down. In the evening, I went with the Battery Commander once again to the battalion. We have been reattached to the *101. le.Inf.Div.*

Saturday, 20 September 1941: A black day in the history of the 1st Battery. The battery was employed in fighting in the town of Reschetilowka. The "C" Gun was hit by an antitank round. One badly wounded; one slightly wounded. The driver went into a state of shock. In the afternoon, a small-caliber artillery round went through the leg of the Battery Commander. It had to be amputated. *Leutnant* Spielmann took over acting command of the battery.

Sunday, 21 September 1941: Around noon, the entire battery went to Poltawa, where the *101. le.Inf.Div.*, to which we have been attached, was also headed. Having barely arrived in Poltawa, the combat elements were immediately employed. The trains initially remained in Poltawa. We took quarters in abandoned apartments.

Monday, 22 September 1941: We continued to stay in Poltawa.

Tuesday, 23 September 1941: At noon, we moved forward to Krjukowa, where we arrived in the afternoon. On the way there, we ran into the combat elements. I spent the night with the trains in the new assembly area. We were attached again to the *57. Inf.Div.*

Wednesday, 24 September 1941: In the morning, we pulled back to Poltawa and then moved along the advance route of the *57. Inf.Div.* as far as Parskawejewka, where we linked up with the combat elements. Day of rest for the battery. The new Battalion Commander, *Hauptmann* von Barisani, has arrived and greeted our battery during the afternoon.

Thursday, 25 September 1941: At noon, the 1st Platoon with *Leutnant* Fellbier was ordered to *Inf.Rgt. 227* and employed there.

Friday, 26 September 1941: Another gun was ordered to *Inf.Rgt. 227*. At noon, *Unteroffizier* Burde brought the news that *Leutnant* Fellbier, *Gefreiter* Schlemminger and *Gefreiter* Traub were killed by a direct hit on the command and control vehicle. *Gefreiter* Jung and *Gefreiter* Hütter were wounded.

Saturday, 27 September 1941: I went to the battalion in the morning. The last dressing could be removed from my wound. At noon, we changed positions to Magdenka. The "Z3" prime mover was back again. The Battalion Commander was up front and distributed Iron Crosses, including an Iron Cross, 1st Class, for *Leutnant* Spielmann. While on the move, we observed eight bombers, which dropped bombs on the town we had just left.

Sunday, 28 September 1941: We stayed in Magdenka.

Monday, 29 September 1941: The planned move up front was called off. Instead, I went to Poltawa in the afternoon, after Spielmann was at the battalion. I took up quarters there in the same building as the Headquarters and the 2nd Battery. We have to wait for new engines and guns.

Tuesday, 30 September 1941: The battery arrived at the new quarters in the morning. *Leutnant* Bobisch was badly wounded and lost his left leg.

Saturday, 4 October 1941: Went to the movies in Poltawa. In the meantime, the entire battalion has had assignment changes among the officers: Adjutant — *Oberleutnant* Gärtner; Liaison Officer — *Leutnant* Kunze; Commander of the 1st Battery — *Oberleutnant* Liedtke; transferred to the 1st Battery — *Leutnant* Seitz. The changes took effect on Wednesday, 1 October 1941.

Saturday, 11 October 1941: After the completed refitting, we marched with six guns to the sector of the *57. Inf.Div.* We had covered more than 100 kilometers by the time we arrived at the location of *Aufklärungs-Abt. 157* at Nastankowka at the onset of darkness. The battalion was in Nastankowka. The trains remained at Filenkow in the vicinity of the division.

Sunday, 12 October 1941: We have been attached to *Inf.Rgt. 199*. The regiment has set up for defensive operations. Within the batteries, we have been checking out options in the event of an enemy attack. In the afternoon, the 2nd Platoon was used to cover a withdrawal.

Monday, 13 October 1941: We remained in the same village without being given anything to do. Unbelievable, rainy and snowy weather.

Tuesday, 14 October 1941: We pulled forward to Kustariaka early in the morning. At present, we are attached to *Aufklärungs-Abt. 157*. However, there is nothing to do the entire day, and we pulled back to the old positions in the evening.

Wednesday, 15 October 1941: We moved back to Kustariaka early in the morning. I went to a nearby collective farm (*Aufklärungs-Abt. 157*) to serve as a liaison officer. *Oberleutnant* Spielmann took care of the logistics. Effective noon, we were attached to *Inf.Rgt. 179*. Shortly after noon, the 2nd Platoon was detailed to *Inf.Rgt. 199* in order to turn back an enemy counterattack. I went with my platoon to the bicycle troop, where we forced back two tanks of British design (Christie). When it turned dark, we all returned back to Kustariaka.

Thursday, 16 October 1941: During the morning, I went back to the old position. The 2nd Battery had already established positions there, however. Early in the afternoon, I was relieved by the 2nd Platoon and went back to our quarters. The situation was very quiet; individual deserters.

Friday, 17 October 1941: We have been reattached to *Aufklärungs-Abt. 157*, which is forming the advance guard. With a few small engagements serving as a diversion, we advanced about 25 kilometers further, as far as Kirassirskij. We searched out quarters with pistols in hand and took numerous prisoners. The "B" Gun collapsed into a basement.

Saturday, 18 October 1941: We continued in the morning. In the afternoon, we launched a small operation against a village, where we scattered a squad of infantry and a section of cavalry. We reached Nowyj-Merstchik towards evening. The "A" Gun became disabled, because it could not get out of reverse.

Sunday, 19 October 1941: At noon, we advanced to another hill. It turned out that the friendly forces to the left had already established themselves there. We crossed the tank ditch and its abandoned field positions there. A mortar, which was putting up a high volume of fire, was engaged late in the afternoon with several effective hits being observed. As it turned dark, Staryj-Mertschik was reached on two sides.

Monday, 20 October 1941: It rained the entire night. The roads have become bottomless. I went back and took our things out of the ammunition vehicle, which had become stuck. I then continued on to the rations vehicles, which had likewise become stuck. I took on some rations and took those back up front with me. I ran into the combat elements upon reaching the major road to Kharkov. Together with our advance guard, we advanced along this relatively well-constructed road. Moving aggressively, vehicular columns and withdrawing Russian infantry were engaged by us. Numerous trucks were captured by us; others, which attempted to break through, were destroyed. Although antitank guns and artillery engaged us occasionally, we were unscathed and reached the bridge over the Udy beyond the village of Pesotschion — just outside the gates of Kharkov — late in the afternoon. We successfully engaged a locomotive and a Christie tank. We formed an all-round defensive position when it turned dark and sent an officer back to the division in order to bring up infantry, so that this strategically important point could be held. Towards morning, an antitank-gun company arrived and, when it turned light, a company of infantry.

Tuesday, 21 October 1941: The artillery was already in position in the morning. The enemy was only demonstrating weak artillery activity. It was quiet. Fuel and ammunition did not make it forward.

Wednesday, 22 October 1941: In the morning, I went with the vehicle of the Battalion Physician back to the trains, since *Leutnant* Konnak, whom we had sent to the division, had not returned. I got there in the evening, after the vehicle got stuck numerous times.

Thursday, 23 October 1941: After the trains had finally reached an improved road and a few unpleasant incidents had taken place, I brought the fuel and the ammunition forward. The battery was already located in a suburb of Kharkov.

Friday, 21 October 1941: When it turned light, I went back to my gun and picked it up along with the motorcycle messengers. New torsion bars had been installed overnight. We reached the assembly area five minutes before the attack was to start. About noon, we reached the center of the city and fought against tanks and guns for a bridge. A propaganda company accompanied us constantly. Later on, we accompanied the 3rd Battalion on the right side. Following that, we advanced even further with the 2nd Battalion. Almost all of Kharkov was in our hand at that point. We set up for the night in the vicinity of the stadium.

Saturday, 25 October 1941: Early in the morning, we combed through the center of the city with the 3rd Battalion. There was no enemy there, and we helped the reporters from the weekly newsreels use up their prescribed meters of film. In the afternoon, we looked for quarters and set up for the night. The trains were already in Kharkov.

Sunday, 26 October 1941: Quiet. Visitors from the battalion in the evening. *Wachtmeister* Thiel's gun was operational, so that we had four guns again.

Monday, 27 October 1941: Quiet. A prime mover was supposed to bring up the "A" Gun. The maintenance section was supposed to look at the "B" Gun.

Tuesday, 4 November 1941: The "A" Gun got stuck. The crew was picked up by us. We marched out in the direction of Dnjepropetrovsk — Melitopol and the area of operations of the *11. Armee*. The roads were in a horrific condition. We only covered 50 kilometers and got as far as Nowaja Wodologa. Our bus became disabled.

Wednesday, 5 November 1941: We got as far as Starowjerowka. 20 kilometers outside of Krasnograd.

Thursday, 6 November 1941: The weather is becoming increasingly unpleasant. We only got as far as a little bit beyond Krasnograd.

Friday, 7 November 1941: We stayed at the same spot, since we first had to get some fuel.

Saturday, 8 November 1941: Although the road conditions were extremely unfavorable, we marched until just a little bit outside of Nowomoskowsk, after 7 cubic meters of fuel had been brought up to us.

Sunday, 9 November 1941: The march led through Nowomoskowsk and a large bridge over the Dnjepr as far as Dnjepropetrovsk. In the evening, we were just outside of Saporoshje.

Monday, 10 November 9141: We marched up to the Dnjepr. It took until evening before we were transported across, since only a slow ferry service was available. We set up in a suburb.

Tuesday, 11 November 1941: We continued in the direction of Melitopol. While *en route*, a blown-up bridge had to be bypassed by moving through a very bad stretch of marshland. In the process, my platoon-leader vehicle became disabled when both front wheels broke off. In the evening, we reached Jantschekrak.

Wednesday, 12 November 1941: Moving at a fast tempo, we reached Melitopol, where we drew quarters in a suburb. The order to move on to Simferopol was already there.

Thursday, 13 November 9141: Because out maintenance section still had not arrived, we stayed in our quarters. In the evening, the maintenance section finally arrived.

Friday, 14 November 9141: We could not depart until the morning, because all of the engines and carburetors were frozen. Despite that, we were still able to cover more than 70 kilometers to Petrowka. Half of the way to Perekop.

Saturday, 15 November 1941: We got as far as Perwo Konstantinowka, just outside of Perekop. The route led through completely monotonous steppes. The thermometer. indicated it was -20 degrees [-4 degrees Fahrenheit].

Sunday, 16 November 1941: We reached Dshankoj (on the Crimea). For the most part, it is also steppe lands here as well.

Monday, 17 November 1941: Early in the afternoon, we reached the city limits of Simferopol at the foot of the Jaila Mountain Range. You had been able to see this range for some time during the movement. It is becoming considerably warmer again. At present, we have four guns. We took up quarters in the greater area of the city, in the suburb of Ukrainka.

Tuesday, 18 November 1941: The vehicles were overhauled and fuel brought up. The Platoon Leaders were switched around among the guns.

Wednesday, 19 November 1941: Ammunition was brought forward.

Thursday, 2 December 1941: Departed in the morning with the "M1" at 0600 hours on a battalion mission to find the maintenance section. Arrived in Melitopol at 1600 hours after covering 360 kilometers. I ran into several vehicles of the battalion there, but no one from the maintenance section.

Wednesday, 3 December 1941: Departed at 0800 hours. We got as far as Nowomoskowsk, which we reached in the afternoon at 1745 hours (295 kilometers). We discovered there that the maintenance section was still in Krasnograd.

Thursday, 4 December 1941: Departed for Krasnograd at 0800 hours. After our arrival at 1030 hours, I made inquiries in accordance with my mission. The maintenance section was, in fact, still there. At 1400 hours, we moved back to Nowomoskowsk, where we arrived at 1630 hours. The travel distance back and forth: 200 kilometers.

Friday, 5 December 1941: While warming up in the morning, our engine burned out. I departed Melitopol with the battery-officer vehicle — which had no brakes and a defective clutch — at 0930 hours. As it started to turn dark, I reached Dshankoj. Forty kilometers outside of Simferopol we had a traffic accident, which bent our bumper so badly that we were no longer able to drive. I hitchhiked to Simferopol and arrived at the battalion at 2230 hours.

Wednesday, 10 December 1941: Third visit to the movies during this campaign. It was showing *"Frau Luna"* ["Mrs. Luna"]. During the weekly newsreel, you could see the 197 in the street fighting for Kharkov. *Wachtmeister* Schrödel firing with the submachine gun and Riecker with the machine gun. Schaff could also be identified.

Saturday, 13 December 1941: Departed in the afternoon at 1700 hours for the assembly area for the planned operation against Sevastopol. The attack has been set for 15 December 1941. After a march of about 60 kilometers, we arrived in the village of Orta-Kisek at midnight.

Sunday, 14 December 1941: The attack has been moved to 16 December 1941. During the afternoon, we went to the coast of the Black Sea, which is about one kilometer away. At 1600 hours, we had a conference in an earthen bunker right behind the lines.

Monday, 15 December 1941: The attack has been moved to 17 December 1941. In the afternoon, there was an enemy dive-bomber attack shortly after a friendly *Stuka* attack.

Tuesday, 16 December 1941: Ammunition and fuel were brought forward to the assembly area in the morning. In the afternoon, around 1600 hours, the combat elements moved into the assembly area. We spent the night sleeping, at least as well as you could in an open staff car. Thank God, it is relatively warm

Wednesday, 17 December 1941: When it turned light, we moved out to attack. We fought for hours on end in front of the main line of resistance without any success. The "F" Gun burned out completely as a result of an artillery direct hit. I ran over a mine in my gun, and we had to dismount. Shortly after that, the assault gun was hit twice. The Russians were firing with calibers up to 38 centimeters. A 15-centimeter round impacted about a meter in front of us and slammed a piece of shrapnel into my leg. We took cover behind the near-by "BF" Vehicle and moved to the rear in its cover. The "C" Gun received a direct hit, and the crew had to dismount. The driver was dead. *Leutnant* Seitz was wounded for the third time and had to go to the hospital.

Thursday, 18 December 1941: We went back to Simferopol with the "E" Gun, all that remained. We arrived there in the morning.

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Friday, 2 January 1941: After the attack on Sevastopol had been called off, the 1st Battery departed for Dshankoj in trucks. It had been beefed up with vehicles and personnel from the other batteries. Eight new guns were supposed to be arrive for us there. Future operations are supposed to be in the area of Feodosia and Kerch, since Russian forces have landed there.

Monday, 5 January 1941: The guns still have not arrived, and it is most likely that it will still take a few more days. In the meantime, the Russians have also landed at Jewpatoria. Partisan and airborne operations are expected tonight and tomorrow night. We are at the highest state of alert. Guard forces have been established and protect the quarters.

Tuesday, 6 January 1941: At 1200 hours, all of the civilian quarters in Simferopol were searched for weapons. There were no noticeable results. At the end of January, the battery returned from Dshankoj. The guns never did arrive. The railway line has been converted to German gauge all the way to Simferopol now.

Saturday, 28 February 1942: During the night, six new guns arrived — all furnished with an African camouflage scheme. They were made ready [for combat] during the day. We received a few staff cars from StuG.Abt. 190, with the result that the battery is ready for operations again.

Sunday, 1 March 1942: Departed early in the morning (at 0600 hours) on the road to Feodosia as far as Stary-Krim, then on to Islam-Terek and, from there, to Seit-Assan (near Dshankoj). We are located on the narrowest portion of the Kerch Peninsula, where the Russians have reduced our front a bit. The roads are in an unimaginable condition once again.

Monday, 2 March 1942: In the afternoon at 1500 hours, there was an attack with artillery preparation on Hill 25.3, which was supposed to be taken to straighten out the front. The attack succeeded with our support, and the guns remained up front during the night with the infantry, since there were no other armor-defeating weapons available. Functioning as the Battery Officer, I stayed at the regiment with the command and control vehicle and went back to Seit-Assan in the evening.

Tuesday, 3 March 1942: In the morning, I brought fuel forward, since the guns were unable to move any further on the way back. The 1st Platoon remained up on the hill and also had to spend the night there.

Wednesday, 4 March 1942: In the morning, the 2nd Platoon also went back up the hill. In the morning, the Battalion Commander came to our battery and took me with him to Wlasislawowka, where the 2nd Battery was in the area of operations of the *46. Inf.Div.* In the afternoon, I conducted reconnaissance for a planned attack with *Inf.Rgt. 105* (*Oberst* Müller) and slept that evening with the 2nd Battery.

Thursday, 5 March 1942: In the morning, I went back to the battery with the Battalion Commander.

Friday, 6 March 1942: Nothing special the entire day. In the evening, a heavy snowstorm started.

Saturday, 7 March 1942: The bad storm continued. It is pretty cold.

Sunday, 8 March 1942: Nothing special.

Monday, 9 March 1942: Nothing special.

Tuesday, 10 March 1942: Nothing special.

Wednesday, 11 March 1942: The platoons moved to the assembly area in the afternoon. Half way there, they were called back, however, since the attack had been postponed. During the night, I went with Spielmann back to *Inf.Rgt. 105* once more so as to orient him. We were back again around midnight.

Thursday, 12 March 1942: Nothing special.

Friday, 13 March 1942: Very heavy enemy artillery fire towards morning. At approximately 0900 hours, the two platoons on the left were alerted and moved out to the infantry regiments employed to our left. The 1st Platoon to Dshankoj; the 2nd Platoon to Kijet. The Battery Commander went to the command post of *Gruppe Hitzfeld* in Dshankoj. I stayed in the quarters; in case logistics had to be arranged. The Soviets conducted massed attacks with infantry and tanks. *Leutnant* Seitz' gun had to be blown up due to damage to its clutch. *Oberwachtmeister* Schrödel destroyed eight tanks; *Unteroffizier* Wedler two. Both of the guns had to be pulled back to the quarters area in the evening due to damage. Spielmann and his platoon destroyed seven tanks and remained in position throughout the night to screen.

Saturday, 14 March 1942: Spielmann knocked out nine tanks.

Sunday, 15 March 1942: Spielmann went forward again in the morning and destroyed seven tanks in the course of the day. The *Wehrmacht* Daily Report announced his "kills" of the last few days. The Russian artillery fired into our village, because Hill 25.3 was lost again on 13 March 1942.

Monday, 16 March 1942: *Oberwachtmeister* Schrödel was mentioned in the *Wehrmacht* Daily Report for his "kills" on 13 March 1942 (eight tanks, three of them heavy KV's). Spielmann went into the old positions again and shot an enemy infantry attack to pieces as well as 11 tanks. The 2nd Battery was operating together with us.

Tuesday, 17 March 1942: Spielmann continued to remain in the old positions. The same for the two platoons of the 2nd Battery (in similar positions). In the afternoon, *Stabswachtmeister* Schmidt was wounded by artillery shrapnel. The Battalion Commander spent a lot of time with us and informed us of an impending friendly tank attack.

Wednesday, 18 March 1942: Moving into positions, as in the last few days. Completely quiet.

Thursday, 19 March 1942: Enemy tank attack, including four 52-ton tanks. *Leutnant* Zäfer's gun was a total loss. Zäfer was wounded as well as his driver. The loader died on the way to the hospital. The gunner had still not made it back by evening and was found dead a few days later. Spielmann's gun was hit and suffered a crack in the recoil mechanism. The driver, Horst Galinski, was slightly wounded. In the course of the day, Spielmann had knocked out another 11 tanks. By evening, the 1st Battery still had two guns operational; the 2nd Battery four.

Friday, 20 March 1942: Spielmann went back into his old position again. The 2nd Battery supported the attack on Tulumtschak by a fresh battalion from the *28. Inf.Div.*, while the *22. Pz.Div.* was supposed to conduct a thrust from the flank. The attack failed completely. The tanks and the rifle brigade were only able to disengage from the enemy with heavy casualties.

Saturday, 21 March 1942: We were told we would be relieved by other assault-gun platoons.

Sunday, 22 March 1942: After the transfer was worked out, we moved out in the afternoon in horrific cold towards Simferopol. We arrived there towards evening.

Thursday, 9 April 942: In the meantime, Spielmann has been awarded the Knight's Cross, which was celebrated a great deal. Of all days — my birthday — the battery was alerted and had to get to the front at Kerch with three guns and two guns from the 2nd Battery (of which one did not come along due to mechanical problems). Because nothing was actually happening, however, the battery was called back and arrived after it had turned dark. At that point, I was able to celebrate my birthday in a worthy fashion. Just before the party started, the Battalion Commander arrived and announced my promotion to *Oberleutnant*.

Sunday, 12 April 1942: In the evening, I had severe kidney pain and had to go to the hospital. Most likely, I have kidney stones again.

Thursday, 7 May 1942: The battery has been back on the Kerch Front for some time, just as the other batteries have. After several postponements, the offensive is finally supposed to start on 8 May 1942. After having received angina while in the hospital — in addition to two more bouts of several abdominal pain prior to being released — I was flown in a *Ju 52* to Bucharest. The aircraft made an intermediate stop at Nikolajew. I was admitted to a *Luftwaffe* hospital in Bucharest. The unaccustomed culture and civilization struck you as if in a fairy tale. I could barely take it all in.

Wednesday, 13 May 1942: After exactlyone week of convalescence, coupled with an X-ray that showed nothing, I was moved to the hospital at Timisul (near Kronstadt). I am supposed to convalesce another 14 days here.

Monday, 25 May 1942: After 12 nice days, including a mountain climb, I took off during the night towards Schweinfurt.

Tuesday, 26 May 1942: Arrived in Szolnok in the evening and was processed for Vienna.

Wednesday, 27 May 1942: Arrived in Vienna early in the morning and continued on to Breslau, where I met Bobisch.

Thursday, 28 May 1942: Continued on to Schweinfurt in the afternoon.

Friday, 29 May 1942: Arrived at the replacement detachment in Schweinfurt at 0800 hours.

Personal Reminiscences of Erich Schmidhäuser (2./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197)

I volunteered for the assault artillery in the summer of 1940. I was tired of…the everyday grind of the replacement detachment.On 10 October 1940, I arrived at Camp Luckenwalde at the *Artillerie-Lehr-Regiment* for my reclassification training. When I saw armored vehicles at the camp, instead of the normal horse or towed artillery, I was amazed. When I asked about the [vehicles], I was shown the new assault guns. It was a completely new sort of support weapon, which impressed me greatly.I was retrained on the new weapons system at a noncommissioned officer course. Since I often get sick while riding in buses or when sitting in the direction opposite that of the travel in trains, I got really bad motion sickness for the first few days in the assault gun, including nausea and vomiting. But after about a week, all that was past, and I got used to the droning, the swaying and the cramped environment and never again had any problems with it.*StuG.Abt. 197* was established at Treuenbrietzen (near Berlin) on 25 November 1940. I went to the 2nd Battery as the gun commander of the "D" Gun. My gunner was Gerhard Liermann, a nice guy from Berlin. The driver was *Unteroffizier* Aust, a vehicle mechanic from Silesia. The loader and radio operator was *Gefreiter* Auffermann from Düsseldorf. He was a quiet, sometime clumsy fellow with aspirations for going to the university. We quickly developed into a magnificently cohesive crew and the best of comrades. The replacement gun commander was *Wachtmeister* Matuschat with his three men. In the beginning, there had to be a complete replacement crew for every gun.The battery had three platoons, each with two guns. Our Platoon leader was *Leutnant* Zäfer, who was supposed to direct operations from an armored radio vehicle (*Sd.Kfz. 253?*). The Battery Commander of the *2./StuG.Abt. 197* was *Oberleutnant* Fuhr, an energetic and dynamic officer. The Battalion Commander was *Major* Christ.We then conducted gunnery with the 7.5-centimeter short-barreled main gun at different ranges, so that the crews slowly developed a feel for the new weapons system. At the end of January 1941, the battalion was moved to Brieg an der Oder in Silesia. The winter of 1940/1941 was so cold that our vehicle mechanics had to run the engines every two hours until they were warm. The vehicles were in enclosed vehicle shelters. An unusual incident occurred in conjunction with this: *Gefreiter* Hindemith, a soldier from Berlin, appeared in the orderly room one evening completely bemused. He was only able to stammer: "Everything's screwed up!" We could not get anything else out of him. The next morning in the vehicle shelters we saw what he was talking about. An assault gun had broken completely through one of the walls and was out on the road. When Hindemith was questioned, it turned out that he had started up the engine in neutral, but the thick oil in the clutch had prevented the gears being in neutral. As a result, the engine was in first gear, and the assault gun took a mighty jump forward. Instead on jamming on the brakes, Hindemith had pulled the key out of the ignition. But by then it was too late. The punishment was a mild one and our construction workers soon repaired the damage. The trip through the wall did not do anything at all to the assault gun. At the beginning of April 1941, there was a crisis in the Balkans, caused by the Italian march into Yugoslavia. This made the intervention of German forces necessary. As a result, we were loaded on trains at Brieg on 8 April 1941. Our destination was initially Leibnitz in Southern Steiermark (Austria). Since a few of the bridges to Yugoslavia had been blown up, we had to wait for two days. We then marched through Mureck, the Austrian city on the border, and then crossed the Drau. We then moved past Agram (Zagreb) and up the Save Valley through Jastrebarsko to Karlovac. While the Slovenes did not exactly act friendly to us, the Croatian populace greeted us in a very friendly manner. There were never any combat operations anywhere. The march in went so quickly that my driver frequently had to drive all day and night. In Karlovac, we were invited in a very nice manner by a Croatian family to a sumptuous Easter meal. There was a lamb roast and a very delectable dark-red champagne. We rolled out from Karlovac into the mountains and through impossible mountain roads and passes in the direction of Banja Luka. But before we could reach Banja Luka, the war was over. The Yugoslavian Army had capitulated. The main reason may well have been the heavy aerial bombardment of Belgrade from *He 111's* and *Ju 87* dive bombers. The area around Lyka, where we halted, was one of the poorest areas I had ever seen.

Everything was a barren karst topography that only had patches of vegetation here and there. Everybody lived together in the wretched huts that had only one door and two small windows. When the door opened in the morning, everything came out: Chicken, geese, goats, pigs and, of course, the inhabitants and their children. We could not fathom how so much could fit into such a small building. After a few days, we started our move back. Our assault gun broke down south of Zagreb. The Battery Commander gave me orders to move to Villach after the vehicle was repaired by the maintenance section. The battery was supposed to establish quarters there. In addition, he gave me a form that authorized all military elements to give me fuel. We were ready to roll again three days later and headed in the direction of Villach. We received rations by paying farmers who were on the side of the road. The getting of fuel proved difficult, since our requirement for 300 liters was a bit too much for some local military commanders. Most of them did not have this quantity on hand. As a result, we had to go begging for our fuel. We drove the entire day and looked for a nice place to sleep at night. The Yugoslavian soldiers, who marched past us day and night, were happy that the war was over for them. We arrived late in the night in the blacked-out city of Marburg (Maribor). Since we were dead tired, we found a place to halt and lay down to sleep. Two of us on the warm rear deck of the assault gun and two in the fighting compartment. In the morning, I was awakened by the clamor of voices and saw through the vision slits that it was already light out. When I opened the hatch, I saw that we were in the middle of the market place and in front of city hall. There was a crowd of people around the assault gun, gaping at it. I quickly shook the two awake who were sleeping under a bundle of blankets on the rear deck. We then turned over the engine and moved out of the city as quickly as possible under the amazed eyes of the local populace. We went to the first creek that we saw and washed up thoroughly, since we were still completely covered with dust and grime from the long movement the day before. After we were finished, we moved up the Drau Valley, enjoying the nicest spring weather imaginable. We moved through Drauburg, Völkermarkt and Klagenfurt and then along Lake Wörth to Villach. It was there that we finally reached our battery and were directed to wonderful private quarters in the home of a nice family. We spent 14 days in Villach. The time was used to maintain the weapons and equipment. But there were also fantastic trips to the surrounding areas (Lake Faak, Lake Millstadt, Lake Oissach, Gerlitzen etc.). In the middle of May we were then told to say goodbye to wonderful Villach. We were loaded on trains and the transports took us to Glatz in Silesia. While we stayed at Glatz, rumors kept surfacing concerning our future employment. For instance, it was said that we would march through Russia to the oil fields in Persia. We had to study Russian maps and become familiar with the Cyrillic alphabet. Everything was really pointing to employment in the east. On 1 June 1941, we were moved by train to the southeast corner of Poland. We detrained in Zamosc. From there, we rolled as far as the border city of Sokol (on the Bug) and occupied a large bivouac site in the woods near Turkovic. We camouflaged the assault guns and the vehicles really well in the woods and established a true tent city. The area was dominated by farming and forests. A large portion of the populace was Jewish, mostly farmers, shopkeepers and craftsmen. They lived in wretched little villages with one-story, very unsightly buildings. We initially spent the time constructing roads. Large military camps and field airstrips were established everywhere. It was not until a few days before 22 June 1941 that we were told that there would be a war with Russia. All of us were depressed. We were supposed to be conducting a preventive strike, since Stalin intended to attack Germany in the near future. When we conducted the reconnaissance for the planned crossing, we saw that the grass was very tall on the railway bridge over the Bug. That was a sign that the bridge was hardly ever used. Whenever we were taking a dip in the Bug and crossed over the middle of it, the Russian guards would immediately appear and threaten us. But that was how we wanted to determine whether the river could be waded in case the bridge were to be blown up. During the evening of 21 June 1941, using the best possible operational security we could, we occupied our assembly areas and firing positions directly on the Bug. The attack was supposed to start the following morning at 0420 hours. During the night of 21/22 June 1941, we occupied our positions directly along the Bug (border). On the morning of 22 June 1941, when it turned first light at 0415 hors, the German artillery fired with everything it had on the military facilities in Sokal and the surrounding area. We moved into our designated firing positions and engaged the targets that had been previously identified. I had been directed to initially take out the Russian observation post in the church tower. We were then to cover the area surrounding the railway bridge, so that it could not be blown up by the Russians. We were then to move into Sokal across the bridge, which was to be made trafficable by planks that were to be emplaced by the engineers. The enemy was completely surprised in his military facilities. After a short fight, we continued

east, where we encountered a well-built line of bunkers and a broad, continuous tank ditch. We made the ditch negotiable by firing high-explosive rounds with delay into the far wall until it had collapsed quite a bit. Following that, there was close-quarters combat in taking on the bunkers. The Russian 5-centimeter pieces could not do much to our frontal armor; vehicles only became disabled by damage to the running gear or the main gun. We attempted to get as close as possible to the bunkers by approaching within their dead zones. We then engaged the firing ports for as long as it took to render the Russian weapons inoperable. The engineers then had to bust apart the bunkers with hollow charges, which penetrated the concrete walls, in case those manning them had not given up. There were instances where the soldiers manning the bunkers brought replacement weapons that were present in the bunkers up to the firing ports and continued to fight. Because our attacking forces continued to advance, the rearward forces had to render these pockets of resistance harmless later on. We overran the village of Tartakow as we moved further to the east, engaging infantry and artillery, sometimes firing with submachine guns and throwing hand grenades from the hatches. When we reached Tartakow, we had reached our objective of the day. The advance continued rapidly forward the next day. The route led us through the former Polish province of Galicia. The terrain was good for armored vehicles: Broad, rolling hill country with scattered villages and patches of woods. The first Russian bombers and close-air-support aircraft surfaced for the first time, however. We saw the first knocked-out and burnt-out German armored vehicles. The crewmembers had been carbonized and shrunk to the size of a child. Looking at those sights made us queasy. We frequently had to cross small wooden bridges that had a rated capacity of only 2-3 tons. Sometimes they held, sometimes they didn't! When that happened, we had to find a fording site. *Wachtmeister* Marks was really unlucky when crossing them. Usually, he moved ahead of me in his gun and was the first one over the bridge. Barely on the bridge, his gun collapsed it. Whenever he let me move ahead, the bridge usually only suffered [apparent] superficial damage, so that he would then collapse it when following me. We then had to hook up the vehicle with a tow cable and carefully pull it out. *Wachtmeister* Marks, who held the record for breaking through bridges, was given the derisive nickname of *U-Geschütz* [= *"U"* Gun, with the *"U"* standing for *Unterwasser*, as in *U-Boot* (submarine)]. On 25 June 1941, we reached the village of Lysin. We were greeted there as liberators by the "Polish Ukrainians". Flags, icons, bread and salt — the signs of welcoming hospitality. The young men even pulled guard duty for us at night, since we were about 10-20 kilometers in front of the infantry and had barely slept at all. Our advance continued rapidly, alternating with engagements. Russian columns often moved on roads parallel to us in their flight to the east. It even happened that columns got mixed up when it was dark and then, when it turned light, there was a firefight to clear up the situation. Our battery had moved too far forward at Katrinburg and we were surrounded by the Russians. Our *Kampfgruppe* consisted of a battalion of infantry and six assault guns. We occupied all-round defensive positions. It should be noted that we did not have any special concerns. We knew that the German forces would rapidly close on us. We did have to turn back intense attacks, however, especially on the second day. Russian cavalry attacked us for the first time. There was a terrible bloodbath when the infantry's machine guns let loose, and we fired ricochet rounds with our guns between the horses that were galloping toward us. The attack finally collapsed about 200-400 meters in front of us. It showed us how a mounted attack was insanity in the face of modern weapons. On 25 June 1941, we conducted an attack with six guns against a strong Russian position around Sitno late in the afternoon. We approached 600-800 meters in a tall field of grain. With the sinking sun and in the high grain, our assault guns with their 2 meters of height were difficult to make out. The Russian defenses had a hard time making out proper targets and, as a result, we were able to eliminate the entire position without any casualties. The spoils were large: 4 artillery pieces (7.62-centimeter *Ratschbumm*); 8 artillery pieces (17.2-centimeter); 6 tanks; and a large quantity of other vehicles. When we looked at the first Russian guns we had captured a little bit closer, we were amazed. *"Rheinmetall"* was on the breechblock of the 7.62-centimeter cannon. It was probably one of the most versatile guns of the Russians and one of their most effective weapons. The initial muzzle velocity of the round is so high, that you cannot hear it coming. (That's the reason why the German soldiers called it the *Ratsch-Bumm*). The cannon that had been developed by us was turned down by the German Army and was then either sold to Russia or copied by it. Our antitank gunners still had the little 3.7-centimeter cannon ("the tank doorbell ringer") or the 5-centimeter antitank gun and were hopelessly outclassed. Other effective Russian weapons were the mortars, up to 15 centimeters. You could hardly hear the mortar round coming. Although they did not have much penetrating ability, they had a horrendous shrapnel effect. The worst weapons, however, were the Russian rocket

launchers, also known as "Stalin Organs". Mounted on trucks, the weapon was very maneuverable and, whenever we heard the rockets cut loose, then only thing that helped was jumping into good cover quickly and hoping that your hole would not be hit within the large surface area, where the rockets would all impact at about the same time. Woe unto him who was caught in the open when the rockets hit. When there were 50 and more impacts with little dispersion, you had little chance. Extremely dangerous opponents were the very modern T 34's. With their good design and armor protection, as well as their long 7.62-centimeter main gun, they were superior to us. We still had the stubby barrels with their 1.58-meter length on our assault guns and had to work our way pretty close to those rascals in order to eliminate them with our 7.5-centimeter main guns. It should be mentioned, however, that we had an advantage in our very low profile. On 8 July 1941, we reached Staro Konstantinow and took an airfield there as well as a lot of military equipment. In addition, we took a lot of prisoners. In the course of a further attack, we were informed that our *Stukas* would soften up the Russian positions ahead of time with a new weapon. We were about 500 meters away from the Russians in our attack positions, when the *JU 87's* dove on the Russian positions with their nerve wracking howl and dropped their bombs right on target. The concussion from the detonating bombs was so strong that a strong pressure wave even reached us. Bombs were used with an especially strong air pressure. The soldiers called them compressed air bombs. When we attacked, there was no resistance whatsoever. The Russians, who had not been in deep trenches or dugouts, were laying around with blue faces — dead. The others, who had survived in trenches, were completely apathetic and allowed themselves to be taken prisoner without resistance. But we never again experienced the use of these air compressor bombs. It was later said that Stalin had threatened to use poisonous gas if these bombs had continued to be used. On 11 July 1941, we advanced on the Stalin Line, an echeloned bunker system constructed after the French model of the Maginot Line. It was well camouflaged. It was able to hold us up with hard fighting for one or two days, but then it was broken at all points. Russian snipers, who had a 15-round self-loading rifle with a scope, appeared more and more frequently. They were well camouflaged (often tied to trees). The held up the advance of our infantry for hours until they were taken out. In this early phase of the Russian Campaign, we were able to collect our first experiences in fighting. After one of our attacks, several Russians surrendered to one of our gun commanders. Since we could not lead them away, we had them throw their weapons down and sent them off to the rear to our infantry. Suddenly, a Russian picked up his rifle behind the vehicle and shot the gun commander standing in his hatch through the head. From that point forward, we had them place their weapons in a row in front of the tracks and then drove over them. *Unteroffizier* Scheibe had taken three Russians prisoner while clearing a trench line. They stood in front of him with raised hands. When he approached them, one Russian threw a hand grenade he had hidden in his hand at his feet. Scheibe was able to jump off to the side before it exploded. In a fit of rage, he emptied his entire magazine. We saw that you had to expect every type of trick in this war and would only survive if you were extremely careful. A few days later, I went through the conquered Russian positions by myself after an attack. You could find all sorts of things there: Binoculars, sniper rifles etc. I was fairly far away from my comrades. Suddenly, standing in the high grain in a field just a few steps away from me, was a Russian soldier, his rifle pointed at me. What I am now recounting took place in the space of a few seconds: Since I had my pistol in its holster on my belt, I knew instinctively that if I waited too long, I was finished. So I yelled at the Russian with the first Russian phrase that I had learned: Surrender…Throw your weapon down…Put your hands up! (Of course, not grammatically correct and all done phonetically). As a result of my self-confident, energetic demeanor, the Russian probably had the impression that there were other German soldiers nearby. In any event, he let his weapon drop. I yelled at him: Come here. I then jumped towards him, raised his rifle and held it to his stomach. It was then that the Russian realized he had been tricked. I said in a more relaxed tone in my native Swabian dialect: You can come along now. From that point forward, I never kept my pistol in its holster when conducting operations. Instead, it was always on a cord, ready to be grabbed and fired. During another combat operation, this time in hilly terrain, an infantryman approached my assault gun and informed me that there were Russian tanks behind the hill. I calmed him down and told him that *Wachtmeister* Pietsch was already there with his assault gun. I went over there with the gun, nevertheless, just to be safe. To the left, behind the slope, I saw Pietsch's gun; approaching him from the right were five light Russian tanks. I was amazed that Pietsch did not fire. Because we were in a better firing position at that point, I gave a fire command. We knocked out all five tanks, one after the other. Because the radio communications had interference, I moved over to Pietsch and

discovered why he had remained passive. A round was stuck in his main gun. He was lucky that time. The air attacks from the Russian close-air-support aircraft continued to increase more and more in the meantime. The IL 2's first dropped entire swarms of 1-kilogram fragmentation bombs, then they strafed us round-robin with rockets, cannon and machine guns. We usually spread our armored vehicles far apart and then observed the air attack through the open hatch. It should be mentioned that one of them blew away half of my hatch with his cannon. In general, however, we suffered few casualties from them. Only once [were there casualties. It happened when] a bomb went right through the open hatch on the gun of *Wachtmeister* Mühleisen. The gun had just been loaded with 320 liters of fuel and 100 rounds of ammunition. There was a huge explosion. There, where the gun had just been located, was a crater with a diameters of about 10 meters. There was nothing left of the gun and the crew. Everything had been scattered in a circle for 100 meters. Our *Oberleutnant* Niemann, who was fairly new at the front, could not fathom what had happened initially. He kept on radioing: Mühleisen, what happened? Why don't you respond? He did that until someone else radioed him and made it clear that things were all over with them! A dogfight took place between *BF* 109's and *Ratas* above our assembly area, with its 14 assault guns and a battalion of infantry. We watched, while two *Ratas* were shot down. Both of the pilots were able to eject, however, and they floated down towards us. The infantrymen were preparing to take them prisoner, when both of them suddenly started firing down on us with their submachine guns. Of course, they were then killed by the infantry while they were still hanging from their parachutes. During some heavy fighting in the Southern Ukraine, we had to suddenly evacuate the village of Schuki due to the fact that the Russian counterattack was too strong. In the school, where a main dressing station had been established, there were about 200 badly wounded soldiers, who could not be evacuated. When we took back the village the next day, all of the wounded had been murdered, some in a terrible manner. That the infantry took hardly any prisoners over the next few days was understandable. It was things like that that made the war in the east continue to escalate in terms of its gruesomeness. The most aggressive infantry attack I experienced was with a battalion of Croatian volunteers. We provided covering fire and then the Croatians stormed the enemy position on the double. Man-to-man fighting ensued. We could no longer fire, since we would have hit our own allies. We had to be content with covering the terrain to the rear. From my hatch, I observed how a Croatian noncommissioned officer threw a stick grenade into a section of trench. He then jumped in immediately and took the shell-shocked Russians prisoner or shot them if they did not surrender quickly enough. He had not even armed the grenade; he only used to exploit a few seconds of terror. He then picked up the same grenade and threw it into the next section of trench. Using the same method, he advanced along the entire trench system. When the fighting was over, I climbed out of my assault gun and addressed the noncommissioned officer on account of his courageous behavior. Then he said with a laugh: "I'm not going to carry a heavy sack full of hand grenades around with me! I've been working with just this one for almost two weeks now." Well, I wished him continued good luck and that things would continue to go well for him. On 14 July 1941, we had to go through heavy street fighting when taking Terespol. We then proceeded through Berditschew and Bjelaja Serkow in the direction of Kiev. We received our first lengthy halt in Makarow on 27 July 1941. It was to rest and get our equipment and weapons back into shape. The preparations for the attack on Kiev were being made. During this halt outside of Kiev, we finally had some time for ourselves. The Ukrainian population, at least those who had not suffered as a result of the fighting, was open minded and not unfriendly towards us. The Russian way of looking at things was often puzzling, however. For instance, when a family member was killed by fire, they wailed in a loud, terrible way for hours on end. In the evening, we saw them again, and they were laughing, singing and dancing. The rapid changes of emotion were strange to us. One day, we were invited to tea with a *Matka*, which was what we called the Russian women. There were four of us sitting in the living room, when she told us she had to fetch drinking water. I sat at the window and saw how she approached the house with a yoke and two full pails of water from the well, which was 30 meters away. Suddenly, she blew her nose with her hand and swished her hand in the water. She then used this same water to make the tea. I lost my appetite, but I did not say anything to my comrades. They praised the good taste of the tea and were surprised that I, of all people, who liked to drink tea so much, did not have any. When we left, I told them why I had not had any. They were about to throttle me. Getting rations in the southern part of the Ukraine was simple. There were whole fields filled with tomatoes, melons, potatoes, sunflowers, grapes etc. We were always able to fill the rations crates on the rear deck of the assault guns. For a while, one comrade even had a rabbit cage with rabbits in it. When we suggested to him that he

slaughter them, he said they had to be well fed for another week and to grow some more. During the next operation, he received an artillery round on the rear deck and there was nothing more to be found of the rabbits. After a few days of rest to recuperate, the advance continued in the direction of Kiev. The Russians had also used the time well, however, and had heavily mined the terrain everywhere. To counter our mine detectors, which reacted to metal, they started to use mines with wood cases in some instances. They were larger wooden crates used as antitank mines (we called them children's caskets.) The fighting against the last strong bridgeheads on the west bank of the Dnjepr south of Kiev started on 14 August 1941. The terrain was infested with mines. During the return on a road one day, *Wachtmeister* Pietsch said to me: "I've had enough of mines. I want you to drive ahead of me." Not concerned, I responded: "I don't care. Supply elements have been driving over the road the entire day." I was sitting in the hatch; two engineers were next to me. Suddenly, there was a gigantic explosion. I flew up into the air as the result of a wave of concussion and heat and landed on the road. I initially felt my back. When I determined there was still cloth there, I calmed down somewhat. We quickly applied dressings to the engineer, who had sat next to me. His face had been badly wounded. His rifle, which he had slung across his back, had been broken in half by the force of the explosion. We had run over a heavy tank mine, which was triggered by the weight of the armored vehicle. It had torn off the left track; it was lying off to the side at some distance along with some of the roadwheels, which weighed several hundred pounds. When other comrades came to help, they had to laugh when they looked at me. *Leutnant* Zäfer held a pocket mirror up to me; I looked as black as a Negro. My eyebrows and hair had all been carbonized and broke off as soon as I ran my hand over them. That my eardrums had also been broken was something I only discovered later. During the attack on the last bridgehead on the right bank of the Dnjepr near Kanew on 23 August 1941, we had tough resistance once again. It was broken terrain with individual farm houses and fruit orchards. Although I enjoyed good cover where I was in my assault gun, the Russian artillery fire was falling right around my vehicle. I therefore ordered a change of position and looked for another spot with cover. The artillery fire followed us immediately. That meant that there must have been a hidden Russian artillery observer behind our lines, who was directing the fire via radio. The Russian guns were on the other side of the Dnjepr and from where I was on the reverse slope, they could not see me directly. I was supposed to go to a conference at the battalion command post at 1100 hours and thus had to dismount the assault gun. As a result of my defective ear, however, I heard an artillery round too late. It was if a foot had kicked me powerfully; I flew forward. I then felt that there was something warm running down my back. I had shrapnel wounds on the right hip and my buttocks. Comrades came to help me and took me to the radio vehicle, which then took me to the main dressing station. I was given immediate treatment there and was then sent to a so-called auxiliary hospital train. It was a freight train that brought ammunition and supplies to the front. They had placed straw in the freight cars and the wounded were loaded in there next to one another. For the trip, everyone received a loaf of bread and canned meat placed under their head. At the various stops, we were looked after by Red Cross nurses and given something to eat and drink. A few of those on the train who had been badly wounded died before arriving in Krakow. We were then temporarily placed in a field hospital (Seydlitz Barracks) and then shipped on to Germany in a train. Of all places, I was unloaded in Brieg an der Oder and went to Mudau Barracks, where we had been stationed before the start of the war with Russia. The military post had been converted to an auxiliary hospital in the meantime. My wounds had still not healed completely, when I was transferred to the replacement detachment in Schweinfurt on 1 September 1941. There I received three weeks of home and convalescent leave. After a short period of easy duty in Schweinfurt, I was declared ready for the front again on 3 November 1941. I was sent back to my old battalion, *StuG.Abt. 197*, which had gone to the Crimea in the meantime. The movement to the Crimea lasted several days. We had to go in freight cars, in which where was only a small gas stove for heating. However, because of the smoke it developed, it could not be used most of the time. So that we could deal with the cold in some fashion, we would run in place. Sleeping was almost out of the question. When we complained to the movement control personnel, we were laconically informed that there were no passenger cars available at the moment. When we arrived at Nikolajew after several days, we could not believe out eyes. In the marshalling yard there was an entire train consisting of heated passenger cars on the track next to us. It was filled with nothing but "golden pheasants" (the name we gave to poke fun at the party comrades who wore brown uniforms and had a gold-colored cord on their caps). We were plenty upset about that. Once in the Crimea, I met up with my old unit in private quarters in Ukrainka, a suburb of Simferopol, the capital of the Crimea. The

preparations for an attack on Sevastopol, which was still being held by the Russians as an important naval port, were in full swing. I was immediately sent to the 2nd Battery as a gun commander. We left our quarters and moved through Bachschisserai, the former capital of the Tartars, and on to our assembly areas in the Jaila Range near Otar Kesek and Bijuk Onlar (both Tartar villages). The area is rural and poverty stricken, but is wonderfully pretty as far as the landscape is concerned: Colorful cliff walls and formations. We had an idea, however, of what we could expect in this difficult country. With regard to the Russian populace, we usually had a good relationship, just as when we were with German farmers in their quarters. Sometimes, we even had a small party with entertainment, music and dancing. We also gave the Russians some of our rations, and the battalion physician and the dentist also treated a lot of Russians, although that was actually forbidden from on high. There was a large tiled stove to heat the Russian houses, which was filled with large pieces of kindling wood. As soon as these had burnt down to charcoal and were only glowing, you closed a damper on the smoke outlet and all of the heat flowed into the room. Even when it was -30 to -40 outside [-22 to -40 degrees Fahrenheit], it warmed up to 20 to 30 degrees in the room [68-86 degrees Fahrenheit]. The Russians usually slept half undressed on their tiled stoves. Sometimes, the locals had to be pressed into work details to do different things, such as snow clearing, street or building repair or the construction of positions. Whenever they were treated properly and decently, they were industrious and also willing. I always ensured that they received their *Katoschkis* (potatoes) after their work was completed and, whenever a Russian girl did not feel well, I released her from work. Otherwise, they were as poor as beggars. I once saw a farmer give his cow horse apples to eat. In the case of a Russian woman, whose skirt got hitched up while shoveling snow, you could see *Deutsche Feldpost* [German Field Post] over where her underwear was (cut out and tailored from a jute postal mail bag). Some of the children wore trousers and jackets that had been tailored out of our old shelter halves. Otherwise, the local populace all wore its gray steppe jackets. It was only in the former Polish portion of the Ukraine that one could still see magnificent folk costumes. A plague that we had not be subjected to during the warmer times of the year then descended on us: Vermin. The clothing lice were bad. Whenever you finally got back to a warm area after a cold day, tired and fought out, those beasts came alive and drove you crazy. You were scratching everywhere, so that despite tremendous tiredness, you were barely able to sleep. Occasionally, we went to a delousing station. The clothing was then put in a large vat and subjected to dry heat. In the clothing, which was hanging on the edge of the vat, the lice were all killed, but the uniforms also turned a brownish color. In the clothes in the interior of the vat, where the heat was not so intense, there were usually more lice afterwards than before the procedure. The second plague were the bedbugs found in some quarters. They hid in the crevices of the beds and wallpaper. The little beasts bite primarily at night at the edges of the clothing: On the head, the throat, wrists and ankles. They also climbed up onto the ceiling at night and let themselves fall onto you. It therefore did no good to put all four bedposts in cans filled with water to keep the vermin at bay. While going on leave in October, I was in a soldier's lodging in Poland, where they were sitting in droves in the folds under the mattress. As a result, I preferred sleeping out in the field in front of the building despite it being a cold night. My comrade went to bed and got through the night without any problems. Apparently, he was completely immune against the creatures. In Bessarabia, I made the acquaintance of the third type of pest: Fleas in droves. The buildings there had floors made out of compressed loam and straw, a magnificent breeding ground for the larva. On 17 December 1941, the attack on Sevastopol started. *Leutnant* Schneider from Frankfurt, who was still somewhat inexperienced at the front, led our *Kampfgruppe*. While moving forward for the attack, he stopped at the cut-off for a small pass, of all places. I expressly warned him that the area around there looked like it had been mined. I also advised him when dismounting to remain in the track marks of the vehicles. He laughed at me and sat down at the edge of some vegetation, where he wanted to light up a cigarette. At the very same moment, the mine he had sat upon exploded. He was so badly wounded that he died after a few hours. I then picked out two Russians from among the first prisoners taken and put them in front of the assault gun to look for mines. At first, they wanted to refuse, but when I threatened them energetically, they knew what was what and cleared a lot of mines. The resistance of the Russians at Sevastopol was enormous. Even in hopeless situations, the elite soldiers — "Stalin" riflemen or marine infantry — did not surrender. Defying death, they often fired in the open from pointblank range at the optics and vision ports of our guns. [One time] an explosive round detonated behind my neck in the fighting compartment, so that I received a lot of small shrapnel. Fortunately, the steel helmet and the winter overcoat kept most of it at bay. A short while later, my loader used a header to get a hand grenade out of the

hatch that had been tossed by someone close in. The thing exploded outside, next to our gun. If that had happened in our gun! We had had unbelievable luck. To the right on a plateau, I suddenly saw large armored cupolas with long main guns rise out of the ground and, after firing with large clouds of smoke, sink back down again. There wasn't much left of our 1st Battery, which was employed over there. There were calibers of up to 32 centimeters. In addition, there was naval artillery with large-caliber guns from the sea. The attack only progressed with extremely heavy casualties and after the attack formations had been replenished with personnel several times. The Russian armored cupolas could often only be cracked open as the result of the heroic efforts of combat engineers and snipers in close quarters combat firing through firing ports. Sometimes, you heard the gigantic rounds approaching like "furniture trucks" — soldier jargon — and you had to jump under cover as quickly as possible. One time, I was standing on the piece of board that we had placed across the half-meter deep muck and slush, when a round came rushing towards me. I was considering what to do, since I did not want to toss myself into the cold slush, when the round impacted just behind me. The muck and slush that was tossed up covered me from head to toe; fortunately, the round had been a dud. That was frequently the case at that time of year, since the igniters would not be set off due to the soft ground. Another experience was considerably more troubling. One morning, when we were supposed to conduct a relatively easy reconnaissance mission, Alfred Wegener, a Silesian who was a driver, approached us and said that he had packed up all of his personal belongings and addressed them. We were supposed to send them to his mother, since he would not be coming back alive today. Almost all comrades had such troubling thoughts directly before combat operations. Alfred Wegener, though, had never expressed such thoughts heretofore. So we said to him: "Since when have you joined the ranks of the fortune tellers?" "Just drop it," he replied. While conducting operations, a heavy round impacted right next to his assault gun. The concussion shook up the crew quite a bit, but the shrapnel could not hurt it. But when the [gun commander] wanted to move on, the driver just sat in his position — dead and with foaming blood on his mouth. The other three members of the crew had been unscathed. The only explanation I can think of is that Wegener had just breathed in deeply when the overpressure came and burst his lungs. He was the only person killed that day. The weather, which had not been too cold up to that point, suddenly changed, and it became ice cold with snow. We had to park the guns and tracked vehicles on boards or fascines in the evening. If we didn't do that, they would be frozen solid to the muck and you needed days to free them up again. Our assembly area was in the vicinity of a main dressing station. When the ground was frozen so hard that no more graves could be dug (up to -43 degrees Celsius) [-45.4 degrees Fahrenheit], the rows of the dead got longer and longer in front of the medical facility. Every day we had the same depressing sight to look at. When the cold became even worse, I discovered an abandoned farmhouse in the no-man's-land between the front lines. Every evening, I would creep there in the darkness and sleep in the building. I just had to get back by morning when it was still dark. Gradually, more and more soldiers spent the night there. When the Russians discovered that, however, they fired on the building with a 7.62-centimeter cannon. When that happened, it had become too dangerous for most, including two of my crew. The next morning, however, both of them had slight frostbite on their feet. Despite the fire from the enemy, I went to sleep in a room on the side of the building turned away from the enemy. It was preferable to me to be there than to have my feet frozen outside. A couple of die-hards placed shelter halves over the holes knocked in the sides of the walls on the enemy side so as to block the cold as well as they could. For all of us, Christmas Eve 1941 remains unforgettable. We had engaged in heavy fighting the entire day and came back to our meager bunker in the assembly area in the evening — completely spent, tired and fought out. We hung our heads and thought we were going to have a miserable Christmas. However, late that evening, the rations officer, Rau, appeared with his truck and brought us packages from home and small Christmas gifts. He even had a Christmas tree with candles with him. It turned out to be the most memorable Christmas of my life. On 31 December 1941, we reached the northern outskirts of Sevastopol. From the high ground at Makenzie-Gori, I saw the Black Sea for the first time — like a steep wall of water in front of me. The airfield was so close you could almost touch it, so that we could almost engage the aircraft taking off. The Russians gave the impression that they were tired and would soon give up. On a moonlit night, I even drove into the northern suburb of Sevastopol with a truck without even being engaged. Then, surprisingly, we received the order from on high to pull back. We reported our situation and the location we had reached. Even the infantry commanders could not understand the apparently senseless order and were howling with rage, since they finally had their objective in front of their eyes after heavy fighting and difficult losses. But

nothing worked. We had to evacuate our positions that same night and pull back to our start positions some 15-20 kilometers to the rear. The Russians only reoccupied the abandoned terrain slowly and in disbelief. Our morale was at a low point. The withdrawal led over a pass at the Belbek Defile. The road was completely iced over and I let the Battery Commander know there was a danger of sliding off. The orders, however: "Pull back without regard to materiel losses!" My assault gun promptly started to slide in one of the iced-over serpentines. Fortunately, I had made sure that no one had put on his headphones and throat mikes for the intercom system. We were thus able to jump off before the assault gun crashed down the defile, which was about 150 meters deep. There was no chance of recovering it. Engineers later went down and blew up the assault gun. At the beginning of January 1942, we were among the trench lines and earthen bunkers of the infantry, full of lice and half frozen. The wind had turned to the east and the temperature had fallen up to -30 degrees [-22 degrees Fahrenheit]. We still had our normal, fairly thin winter overcoats, since we had always been told that the Crimea was warm, after all. It was in this bleak and depressing state that I was visited by the orderly room noncommissioned officer in the middle of January 1942. He told me that I needed to get ready to be transferred to Germany to my branch school [which was a prerequisite for commissioning as an officer]. I had always turned that down earlier, since I liked the noncommissioned officer positions. But in this miserable situation, I was happy just to get out. I said my good-byes to *StuG. Abt. 197*, where there was a magnificent camaraderie, and started a new chapter in my life as a soldier. I first had to report to *StuG.-Ersatz-Abt. 200* in Schweinfurt. From there I went on a short leave home. On 24 January 1942, I was sent to Jüterbog (near Berlin) to the officer branch course. I was in Officer Candidate Course 9 at *Artillerie-Schule II*. The course director was *Hauptmann* Lützow, a Knight's Cross recipient. He was a fine, very pleasant and educated man. The class consisted of 25 participants, nothing but combat-experienced noncommissioned officers. There was a refined, comradely way of conducting course work; there was no party or political *Nazi* indoctrination. The training consisted of general topics, tactical instruction, weapons training, classroom instruction and lectures. I have to say that I learned more there that was useful to me later in life than I had in school. The days in Jüterbog quickly came to an end, however. After the course was over on 1 June 1942, I was promoted from *Unteroffizier* to *Leutnant*. Following that, I went to a technical course related to assault guns with the *III./Artillerie-Lehr-Rgt. (mot.) 2* until 6 July 1942 (driver's training and maintenance topics). From 7 July to 14 September, I went back to *Sturmgeschütz-Ersatz-Abteilung 200* in Schweinfurt, although I was detailed to a vehicle course for officers at the artillery school in Luckenwalde from 27 July to 22 August 1942. Well prepared from a professional basis, I went to *StuG.Abt. 600 (Feld)* on 15 September 1942, which was in the center sector of the front at Briansk.

First-Hand Account of Hans Tams (Headquarters Battery, Written in the 1990's)

Now that the war has been over for more than 50 years, I feel obligated to write down my experiences for posterity and incorporate my photographs, which I myself took for the most part, into my account. I took my military entrance physical in Pinneberg in the fall of 1939 and was found fit for service with the motorized artillery. Right after being sworn in, I had to surrender my passport and was not permitted to leave the *Reich*. That was a source of great irritation to me, since I wanted to continue my professional training in Sweden. Call-Up At the beginning of October 1940, I received orders calling me up. I had to appear by 1200 hours on 1 October 1940 at the Douamont Military Facilities in Hamburg-Wandsbek. I was assigned to the *2. (schwere)/Artillerie-Ersatz-Abteilung 58* there. I went for training in the motorized battery. Our training was two months: One half day of infantry training; one half day of driving school. The duty day started at 0600 hours with a wake-up cap and ended with taps at 2200 hours. We received 1 *Reichsmark* a week in pay. After we had received out drivers' licenses at the end of November 1940, we were given a presentation on the new branch of service — the assault artillery — which made it look very enticing. We were then encouraged to volunteer for the assault artillery. Of the 80 members of the company, 36 volunteered. Of those, 18 were selected. I was among them. Prior to that, we were sworn in and, as a result, were bound by military law. In addition, we were pledged to secrecy in the future, since the assault artillery was a completely new type of weapon. At the beginning of December 1940, we were sent to the Jüterbog Training Area (south of Berlin) and had to report to the "New Camp". We were assigned to *StuG.Abt. 197* there. The battalion had just been established and consisted of three line batteries and a Headquarters Battery. I was assigned to the Headquarters Battery as a truck driver.

The Headquarters Battery consisted of:

- The commander and his staff
- The Battalion Physician and his medical section
- A Paymaster for pay purposes and the rations section
- An administrative official and a shop foreman for the 30-man maintenance section.

The administrative head of the battery was the *Hauptwachtmeister*. In addition, the battery also had an arms room, an air-defense section and a fueling section. The line batteries had three platoons, each with three assault guns, and the respective logistics vehicles. The end strength of the battalion was around 600 men. The assault gun had a weight of 22 tons. It was powered by a gasoline engine. The armament of the gun was a tank main gun of 7.5 centimeters. I was given a 3-ton *Opel Blitz* truck and assigned to the fuel section. I drove that vehicle for 2.5 years and later transferred it undamaged to my successor. After all of *StuG.Abt. 197* had been outfitted for war, it was sent to Brieg in Silesia at the beginning of February 1941. We were stationed in the Mudra Military Facilities at Brieg until 7 April 1941. The battalion was primarily trained in rail-loading operations, land marches and combat drills during this time. The first wartime employment was in Yugoslavia. On 7 April 1941, we were awakened in the morning at 0600 hours while we were still in bed by an alert. The reason was not given. Our orders: Rail load immediately. By 0900 hours, our batteries with all of their equipment were ready to depart on four different trains. We took off to the south, without knowing our final destination. On 8 April 1941, we crossed the Semmering Pass in the direction of Klagenfurt. At the age of 21, I crossed the Alps for the first time! What an experience! While in the middle of the movement, we discovered via radio that Germany was at war with Yugoslavia. We started to fathom where our trip was taking us. In the vicinity of the capital of the Austrian province of Carinthia, we were unloaded and moved to the border with Yugoslavia. There we were forced to take a break, since the bridges over the Drau had been blown up. After three days, the engineers had finally constructed a temporary bridge and we finally took off. When we got over the border, the combat power of Yugoslavia had already been broken. As a result, we were able to move through Ljubljana (earlier: Laibach) to Zagreb (Agram) in Bosnia. The war for us was over without our battalion having fired a shot. The entire operation lasted 10 days. We then left Yugoslavia again. For me as a fuel-vehicle driver it was a hard baptism of fire, since I was responsible for getting fuel to my battery day and night. On 9 May 1941, we were again loaded on the train. Our destination was the old fortress city of Glatz in Silesia. Much to our disappointment, we were actually quartered in the fortress in Glatz. All of the soldiers that had been sentenced to prison or the penitentiary were housed there. They had been degraded, had no should straps or any other symbols of rank and bore no decorations. Since we had to perform our vehicle duties next to these "poor suckers", the weeks that we spent stationed in Glatz were not a pleasant time. Only one day-long trip, which we took through the Sudeten Mountains with our vehicles as a convoy, remains behind as a pleasant memory. At the end of May 1941, we received new orders to load up the entire battalion on trains. This time, the transport trains headed east and we moved far into central Poland as far as the demarcation line between Western Poland, occupied by the Germans, and the eastern half of Poland, which had been annexed by the Soviet Union. At the small city of Sokal, in the vicinity of the Bug River along the border, we occupied an assembly area that had been designated for us in a thick patch of woods. Since there was an official non-aggression pact between Germany and Russia, we found it extremely odd that we had been moved there. We were informed that our battalion had been designated as a general headquarters force by the highest levels of command and that we had been allocated to the *6. Armee* for the time being. In addition, we were pledged to secrecy concerning out military equipment and were not allowed to leave the assigned area of the battery any more. In the meantime, we had received the field-post number of 25620. All mail, whether going home or coming to us, was sent for free. Effective immediately, all soldiers who were along the front in the east received a supplemental pay of one *Reichsmark* a day. In addition, we were ordered to carry our dog tags on a string around our neck day and night. Whoever was caught in non-compliance by an inspection was given three days of arrest.Our battalion was given a wooded district without buildings or sanitary facilities. We had to wash in a creek that was nearby, and the construction of toilettes (latrines) was initiated immediately. We slept in tents or in the vehicles. Since we entered the woods in a tactical fashion in June of 1941 and had been set up close to the Russian border, there were all sorts of rumors as to what it all meant, especially since our government had a non-aggression pact with our presumed enemy. There were also serious discussions that took place stating that we were supposed to march through Russian to Persia in order to secure the oil sources needed for the continuance of the war. (But we would deceive ourselves bitterly in this regard.) As a fuel-truck driver, I was one of the few truck drivers who had to leave the restricted zone daily with special march orders, so as to pick up fuel and mail. As a result, I had the opportunity to visit the enlisted club at Sokal occasionally, among other things. Of course, I also furtively discussed the rationale for our being here with soldiers from other units. It was noteworthy to us that our drivers had to learn the Russian alphabet so as to be able to decipher the signposts. It was likewise curious that the assault-gun crews had to bathe in the Bug River. (It was later found out that they wanted to determine whether the assault guns could ford the river if the crossing bridge had been blown up.) On the evening before the start of the war, on 21 June 1941, the entire battery had to assemble in a ceremonious fashion and wearing a steel helmet at 2000 hours to receive orders. All personal weapons were to be carried and even the Battery Commander wore a steel helmet. The order of the day from the "*Führer* of the Greater German *Reich*" was read aloud. (I never again experienced something with so much ceremony attached to it.) After 55 years, I can only write about it from memory, of course. Paraphrasing it, the order basically stated that we would attack the Soviet Union in the morning at 0315 hours. The reason for it: The secret state police had found out in Poland that our opponents would attack us no later than a month from now! On the eve of the attack on the Soviet Union, we were told in no uncertain terms that we had to count on dealing with a numerically

far superior force in the case of the Soviet military and that the Soviets possessed large air and tank forces. We were also informed in no uncertain terms that we could only win this fateful struggle against Communism if 1.) we struck bravely and 2.) we made use of our technologically superior equipment. Once this announcement was made, we were initially released until there was another issuance of orders. I believe that no soldiers slept this night (21/22 June 1941). Right on time — to the minute and as announced — things started at 0315 hours. Fire was opened from untold numbers of cannon barrels at the same time. All at once, the sky was red, coupled with an eerie thunder of cannon. A frightening experience. After about 10 minutes, there was a deathly silence, followed by nothing but the sounds of engines the entire day as vehicles headed out. It was announced that the bridge over the Bug had remained undamaged; the villages on the other side had suffered terribly as a result of the barrage. The *6. Armee* had set itself in motion to the east. In the evening, at 2000 hours, we received orders to depart into enemy country; our assault guns needed fuel and ammunition. Our axis of advance was Sokal — Shitomir — Kiev. After one year of service, I was promoted to *Gefreiter*. I then received 20 *Pfennige* more each day in pay and another 1 *Reichsmark* as day in combat pay. This meant that I received 22 Marks every 10 days. Our fuel section: The fuel section in the headquarters Battery consisted of a fuel truck and three men. I belonged to this section for 2.5 years. Initially as a driver and then as the section leader. Our equipment consisted of 200 [20-liter] fuel canisters, 2 hand pumps, 1 motor-oil barrel and 1 transmission-oil barrel and hand pumps. Almost daily, two men had to transfer and then dispense 4,000 liters of fuel by hand. The fuel dumps were between 100 and 300 kilometers away. After advancing 1,000 kilometers, we reached the Dnjepr 10 days after Kiev (capital of the Ukraine). Since the bridges were destroyed, we headed without a break to the city of Krementschug, 800 kilometers to the south. There we experienced something that we never again experienced during the war. Our *6. Armee* crossed the Dnjepr. The engineers had constructed an 800-meter-long pontoon bridge, over which the vehicles crossed in an endlessly long column. After heavy fighting, we reached the city of Poltava at the beginning of October 1941. Because our assault guns and vehicles had suffered greatly, we received a mandatory pause from the German Army High Command. I was also exhausted physically and received a few days of rest. On 3 November 1941, the last city of the Ukraine, Kharkov, was taken. *StuG. Abt. 197* was released from the *6. Armee* and sent to the Crimea and the *11. Armee*. At that point, our forces had already taken the Crimea. Only the Kerch Peninsula (crossing point to the Caucasus) and the naval fortress of Sevastopol had yet to be taken. Our Headquarters Battery received orders to conduct a road march of 1,200 kilometers to the Crimea. It was an unimaginable journey through muck. Half of the vehicles became disabled along the way. On 3 November 1941, we took off and reached the Crimea on 24 November 1941, moving though the narrows at Perekop. While the line batteries were at the front, we were in the village of Ukrainka, right near the capital of Simferopol. On 1 May 1942, I was the first one in the battery to receive the War Service Cross with Swords and was promoted to *Obergefreiter*. I was also awarded the Crimea Badge and the Medal for "fighting in the East During the Winter of 1941". Right after the fortress of Sevastopol and the Kerch Peninsula fell, we immediately took off again in the middle of June by train. This time towards the north. We took up positions at Spass-Demensk, about 100 kilometers southwest of Moscow. The front had been pushed back to there during the winter of 1941/1942. It was also very quiet at the front. It was there that I received my first 3-week annual leave after having been with the assault artillery for 22 months. Moving through Minsk (White Russia), Bialystok (delousing), Poland and Berlin, I got to Eckernförde (through Kiel). I then took the narrow-gauge railway to my home village. After five days of traveling, I was home. Although everything still followed its normal routine there, I felt out of place. At the beginning of December 1942, I arrived back at my battery. In the meantime, nothing serious had happened, and it continued to be quiet at the front until the spring of 1943. We were about 10 kilometers behind the front and had light duty the entire winter. In February 1943, the rumor circulated that we were supposed to be transferred back to Germany soon. No one believed that, of course. And yet it was true. In the middle of March, inspections were set up and conducted for all of the vehicles and equipment. Everything had to be spotless. It may sound like a miracle, but we traveled back towards Germany the next day. At morning formation we were informed that we were to be disbanded and everyone had to transfer his vehicle or set of equipment. There was no one to be seen far and wide, and we were all very skeptical. Suddenly, a train rolled into our village. About 600 soldiers detrained and went to the individual batteries. Every man from the new assault-gun battalion had already been given his assignment in Germany and knew exactly what he had to do. A driver and assistant driver came to me. Just like in peacetime, our vehicle logs and our tanks were transferred with a receipt. After 10 minutes, everything was done. With a short handshake and a "All the best, comrade!", we took off in the same train that our relief had used back towards the homeland. We went as far as Fallingbostel in Lower Silesia and were stationed there. We were all very happy that we received 10 days of administrative leave first. Two weeks after we had arrived at Fallingbostel, we were ceremoniously discharged from the assault artillery by [*Generalmajor*] Hoffmann-Schönborn and transferred to the tank destroyer branch of service Good-bye, assault artillery!

Military Career of Major Johann Spielmann

Justification for the Award of the Knight's Cross
Official Justification:

On 27 February 1942, the Soviet forces started their offensive to take back the Crimea along the Parpatsch front and the narrows of Kerch. The 1st and 2nd Batteries of *StuG.Abt. 197* were initially employed in the sector of the *46. Inf.Div.*, then later with the *170. Inf.Div.* and then with *Inf.Rgt. 213*. On 13 March 1942, 53 Soviet tanks attacked with infantry. Spielmann's platoon was rapidly ordered behind the left wing of *Inf.Rgt. 213* (*Gruppe Hitzfeld*). *Leutnant* Spielmann then brought the enemy attack to a standstill with six assault guns. Two guns became disabled with track damage from mines. According to an article by the war correspondent Otto-Werner Frank, Spielmann set 13 tanks and *Oberwachtmeister* Schrödel 8 tanks alight in the first two hours of the unequal struggle. In all, 44 tanks were destroyed by the 4 guns. The Daily report of *Heeresgruppe Süd* for 14 March 1942 stated: "One platoon of *StuG.Abt. 197* — under the leadership of *Leutnant* Spielmann — knocked out a total of 14 enemy tanks on 13 and 14 March 1942. He contributed significantly to the successful defense against the attacks in an area where there was only a thin line of infantry." This report then led to a mention in the *Wehrmacht* Daily Report. Spielmann participated in the success of his platoon by knocking out 7 tanks on 15 March 1942 and 11 tanks on 16 March 1942. On 19 March 1942, *Inf.Rgt. 213* reported that Spielmann and his men had knocked out another 9 tanks.

Remarks in the Unit History of *Infanterie-Regiment 213*:
In the unit history of *Inf.Rgt. 213*, the following can be found: "All of the infantrymen were especially happy at the time that the assault gun platoon of *Leutnant* Spielmann succeeded in rendering a total of 49 tanks combat ineffective in the sector of the regiment — 35 in just four days alone, including several super-heavy tanks. The regiment submitted this brave assault-gun
leader, who was always eager to do his duty, for the Knight's Cross, which he also received."

Other information:
On 8 May 1942, assumed acting command of the 1st Battery in the area of operations of the *50. Inf. Div*. Likewise employed with the *50. Inf.Div.* during the assault on Sevastopol, *Oberleutnant* Spielmann distinguished himself again. He was again mentioned by name in the *Wehrmacht* Daily Report (13 June 1942), where it was stated that Spielmann's battery supported the attack on a toughly defended hill, which was protected by mines and which had numerous bunkers and positions blasted into the cliffs. Although *Oberleutnant* Spielmann was wounded for the seventh time in the process, he remained at the head of his battery in his assault gun until the enemy was eliminated.

Justification for the Award of the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross:

After convalescing for 12 months in a hospital, Spielmann was designated as the commander of *StuG. Brg. 202*, which he led from success to success. The areas of operation were Tukkum (October 1944) and Frauenburg (Christmas 1944). At the end of the year 1944, the brigade scored its 1000th tank "kill" since it was established in the spring of 1941. On 29 December 1944, *Hauptmann* Spielmann was mentioned for the third time in the *Wehrmacht* Daily Report under the heading: "Continuation of the fighting in the West, in Hungary and in Kurland". The following was to be read there: "The three defensive battles in Kurland have cost the enemy 1,235 tanks. Numerous tanks can be chalked up to the assault gun brigade commanded by Knight's Cross recipient *Hauptmann* Spielmann, which knocked out its 1000th tank on 27 December 1944. It destroyed 273 of those tanks during the last five months in the northern part of the Eastern Front". In the 3rd Battle of Kurland, *StuG.Brg. 202* was once again at the hot spots of the fighting south of Frauenburg and north of Doblen. In addition to numerous infantry targets, the assault guns of the brigade knocked out 44 tanks and 10 antitank guns there in three days alone. By doing so, the brigade had raised its total "kills" to 1,017 tanks. As always, *Hauptmann* Spielmann led every attack of his assault guns from the front during the last few months. He received the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross after his promotion to *Major*, because his brigade prevented an enemy breakthrough during the 3rd Battle of Kurland.

Military Career:

1 October 1936 Reich Labor Service in Biberach/Riss
5 November 1937 Assigned to the 2./Artillerie-Regiment 5 in Donaueschingen
1 April 1938 Detailed to a reserve officer candidate course at Donaueschingen and Pilsen
13 October 1939 1./leichte Artillerie-Ersatz-Abteilung 5
22 November 1939 1./Artillerie-Regiment 5
1 February 1940 Battery Officer in Batterie Igman (Donaueschingen)
16 March 1940 Battery Officer in the I./Artillerie-Regiment 401
1 May 1940 Battery Officer in the 1./Artillerie-Regiment 206
16 November 1940 Detailed to the officer manpower pool of the German Army High Command and, at the same time, detailed to the VI./Artillerie-Lehr-Regiment (mot.) 2 (Jüterbog); transitioned to assault guns
25 November 1940 Platoon Leader (later: Acting Battery Commander) in Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197

8 May 1942	Battery Commander of the 1./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197
1 April 1943	Battery Commander of the 1./schwere Panzerjäger-Abteilung 653
5 July 1943	Badly wounded on the Eastern Front at Orel; 12-month convalescence in a hospital
17 November 1943	Administratively attached to Sturmgeschütz-Ersatz- und Ausbildungs-Abteilung 200
8 August 1944	Assigned to Sturmgeschütz-Ersatz- und Ausbildungs-Abteilung 200
4 September 1944	Acting Commander of Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 202
9 January 1945	Commander of Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 202 (with an effective date of 1 January 1945)

Participation in the campaigns in France, Yugoslavia and Russia, as well as in the battles for Kurland.

Mention in the Wehrmacht Daily Report of 15 March 1942:
During the fighting on the Kerch Peninsula, a platoon from an assault-gun battalion under the leadership of Leutnant Spielmann knocked out 14 enemy tanks on 13 and 14 March 1942.
Mention in the Wehrmacht Daily Report of 13 June 1942:
During the fighting outside of Sevastopol, Knight's Cross recipient Oberleutnant Spielmann, the Battery Commander in an Assault-Gun Battalion, and Oberleutnant Frank, the Company Commander in an Infantry Regiment, distinguished themselves through special bravery.
In Allied captivity from 10 May 1945 through 8 June 1946
Other Decorations and Awards:

13 July 1941	Iron Cross, Second Class
11 September 1941	Wound Badge in Silver
26 September 1941	Iron Cross, First Class
5 August 1941	Assault Badge
31 October 1941	Wound Badge in Gold
28 March 1942	Recognition certificate from the Führer
13 June 1942	Recognition certificate from the Führer
12 September 1942	Medal for the Winter Fighting in the East
11 November 9142	Crimea Badge

Promotions:

1 October 1938	Gefreiter and Officer Candidate
1 June 1938	Unteroffizier
1 October 1939	Wachtmeister
1 February 1940	Leutnant der Reserve
1 February 1942	Leutnant (active duty, with an effective date of 1 February 1942 and a date-of-rank for administrative purposes of 1 January 1940)
14 March 1942	Oberleutnant (with an effective date of 1 February 1942 and a date-of-rank for administrative purposes of 1 March 1942)
15 February 1943	Hauptmann (with an effective date of 1 January 1943)
14 February 1945	Major (with an effective date of 1 March 1945)

High Awards Presented to Soldiers of the Battalion

German Cross in Gold

Schrödel, Fritz *29 June 1915	*Oberwachtmeister* Platoon Leader *1./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197* Iron Cross, 2nd Class: 13 July 1941 Iron Cross, First Class: 26 September 1941	11 April 1942 *XXXXII. Armee-Korps* *11. Armee* *Heeresgruppe Süd*

Recognition Certificate from the *Führer* for deeds performed at Tulumtschak on 13 March 1942

Brinke, Ulrich 28 March 1916	*Oberleutnant* Battery Commander *1./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197* Iron Cross, Second Class: 1939 Iron Cross, First Class: 13 July 1941	8 January 1943 *LV. Armee-Korps* *2. Armee* *Heeresgruppe B*

Killed on 15 January 1945 as the Brigade Commander of *Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 277* at Schloßberg (East Prussia).

Steinwachs, Heinz 5 October 1897	*Hauptmann* Battalion Commander *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197* Iron Cross, Second Class: 21 June 1940 (Also received in WWI) Iron Cross, First Class: 21 April 1941 (Also received in WWI)	25 March 1942 *22 Infanterie-Division* *LIV. Armee-Korps* *11. Armee* *Heeresgruppe Süd*
de la Renotiere, Gerald	*Oberleutnant* Battery Commander *3./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197*	28 July 1942

Personnel of the Battalion

Name	Rank	Unit	Duty Position /Comments
Abendroth, Harry	?	Maintenance Section	?
Adam, Hans	*Kraftfahrzeug-Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Ahl, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Alberts, Walter	*Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Albinus, Kurt	*Unteroffizier*	2nd Battery	?
Altmann, Heinz	*Unteroffizier/Feldwebel*	Headquarters Battery	Mess Sergeant
Altpass, Heinrich	?	Maintenance Section	?
Altrichter, Franz	?	2nd Battery	?
Andree, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Appel, Heinrich	*Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Auffermann, ?	*Gefreiter*	2nd Battery	?
Aust, ?	*Unteroffizier*	2nd Battery	Assault-gun driver
Autheried, Fritz	*Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Baasch, Karl	?	2nd Battery	?
Bachmeier, ?	*Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Backmeister, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Bader, Karl	*Unteroffizier/Feldwebel*	3rd Battery	?
Barisani, Kurt von	*Hauptmann*	Headquarters Battery	Battalion Commander
Bartz, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Bauermeister, ?	*Kanonier*	1st Battery	?
Bauermeister, Dr. Herbert	?	Headquarters Battery	Battalion Physician
Baumbach, Georg	*Obergefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	?
Beck, August	*Gefreiter*	2nd Battery	?
Becker, Hans	*Oberleutnant*	Headquarters Battery	?
Behmer, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Beise, Walter	*Unteroffizier/Leutnant*	1st Battery	?
Berghaus, Hugo	?	3rd Battery	?
Berner, ?	*Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Bernsdorf, Werner	*Unteroffizier*	Headquarters Battery	?
Biedermann, ?	*Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Biermann, Ferdinand	*Wachtmeister/Leutnant*	3rd Battery	?

Binder, Helmut	?	Headquarters Battery	Battalion Clerk
Binkenstein, Heinz	Leutnant	Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battery	?
Blender, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Bobisch, Hans	*Leutnant*	2nd and 3rd Batteries	?
Böhm, Sepp	?	Headquarters Battery	Assault-gun driver
Bönike, Erich	*Unteroffizier*	2nd and Headquarters Batteries	Radio operator
Borsum, Otto	?	Maintenance Section	?
Bosch, Alfred	?	Maintenance Section	?
Brandmayer, Arnold	*Feldwebel*	3rd Battery	?
Brandstetter, ?	?	?	?
Braun, Gerhard	*Gefreiter*	2nd Battery	?
Brinke, Ulrich	*Oberleutnant/Hauptmann*	1st Battery	Battery Commander (killed in action)
Brunnthaler, Toni	*Feldwebel*	Headquarters Battery	?
Büchele, Heinrich	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Bülck, Hans-Jürgen	?	3rd Battery	?
Bull, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Burde, ?	*Unteroffizier/Unterwachtmeister*	1st Battery	?
Busch, Gerhard	*Gefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	Driver
Caesar, Wolf-Dietrich	*Wachtmeister / Leutnant*	3rd Battery	?
Cantz, Hermann	*Oberkanonier / Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Carpentier, Matthias	*Kanonier*	3rd Battery	?
Charwat, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	Administrative Clerk
Christ, Helmut	*Major*	Headquarters Battery	Battalion Commander
Cornelius, Max	?	3rd Battery	?
Correll, Karl	?	Maintenance Section	?
Czekalla, ?	*Gefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	?
Czermak, ?	*Kanonier*	1st Battery	Ammunition driver (killed in action on 1 August 1941)
Czichochewski, ?	*Wachtmeister*	3rd Battery	?
Deffner, ?	*Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Degele, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Deisl, Martin	?	3rd Battery	?
Deyn, Herbert von	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Dietz, Gottlieb	?	3rd Battery	?
Dorsch, ?	*Gefreiter / Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Drohne, ?	*Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	Killed in action on 8 May 1942
Duschanek, Rudolf	?	Maintenance Section	?
Eberle, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Ebus, Franz	?	2nd Battery	?
Eckert, Heinrich	*Obergefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	Driver
Effinger, Karl	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Ehrentraud, Helmut	?	3rd Battery	?
Ehrle, Hans	*Gefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	?
Elfner, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	Driver
Ernst, Anton	*Obergefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	?
Evers, Fritz	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Faulhammer, Julius	*Unteroffizier*	Headquarters Battery	?
Fechtner, ?	*Oberwachtmeister / Leutnant*	1st Battery	?
Federer, Hermann	?	1st Battery	?
Fellbier, ?	*Leutnant*	1st Battery	Killed in action on 25 September 1941
Fischer, Albert	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Fischer, Gerhard	*Gefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	?
Flatscher, Hermann	?	Maintenance Section	?
Flick, Karl-Heinz	*Gefreiter / Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Flintrop, Wilhelm	*Unteroffizier / Wachtmeister*	1st Battery	?
Förster, Heinz	?	3rd Battery	?

Foth, ?	*Oberwachtmeister*	1st Battery	Killed in action on 22 June 1941
Frank, Alfred	?	Maintenance Section	?
Franke, Walter	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Frenzel, ?	*Kanonier*	1st Battery	Driver
Freuer, Paul	?	2nd Battery	?
Friedrich, ?	*Oberfeldwebel*	Headquarters Battery	?
Fuhr, ?	*Oberleutnant*	2nd Battery	Battery Commander
Gaggl, Franz	?	2nd Battery	?
Gallinger, Max	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Gandenberger, Ludwig	?	Maintenance Section	?
Gardung, Hans	*Gefreiter*	2nd Battery	?
Gärtner, Adrian	*Oberleutnant*	Headquarters Battery	Adjutant
Gautann, Ernst	*Gefreiter*	3rd Battery	?
Gerer, Richard	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Gförer, Felix	?	?	?
Goewe, ?	*Oberleutnant*	3rd Battery	Battery Commander (killed in action on 6 October 1941)
Golinski, Horst	*Gefreiter / Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Gollner, ?	?	Maintenance Section	?
Gorgas, ?	*Wachtmeister*	1st Battery	?
Göstl, Fritz	?	1st Battery	?
Gottschalk, ?	*Obergefreiter / Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Grohal, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	Killed in action on 17 December 1941
Grosch, Karl	*Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Gruissem, Josef	*Unteroffizier*	Headquarters and 1st Batteries	?
Gusel, Alfred	?	3rd Battery	?
Habeck, Hans	*Gefreiter*	2nd Battery	?
Haberland, Werner	*Wachtmeister / Leutnant*	1st and 3rd Batteries	?
Hacker, ?	*Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	Gunner
Hagl, Adolf	?	2nd Battery	?
Hahn, Martin	?	3rd Battery	?
Hamann, Rudolf	*Gefreiter / Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Hanseder, Hans	*Feldwebel*	Headquarters Battery	?
Hartel, Alfred	?	3rd Battery	?
Hatzmann, Walter	?	?	?
Haug, Willi	?	3rd Battery	?
Haupt, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Hauser, Alfred	?	?	?
Hecker, Otto	*Wachtmeister*	2nd Battery	?
Heinemann, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	Driver
Heinrich, Adolf	?	3rd Battery	?
Henning, Heinz	*Gefreiter / Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Hentz, Gustav	?	Maintenance Section	?
Herrmann, ?	*Obergefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	Battalion Commander's driver
Hetzert, ?	*Wachtmeister*	1st Battery	?
Heusel, Hans	?	Maintenance Section	?
Heynemann ?	*Gefreiter / Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	Radio Operator
Hindemith, ?	*Gefreiter*	2nd Battery	?
Hochwieser, ?	?	?	?
Hoffmann, Rudi	*Unteroffizier*	Maintenance Section	?
Hoffmann, Fritz	?	3rd Battery	?
Holzapfel, Adam	?	2nd Battery	?
Höppner, Walter	*Oberkanonier / Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Hornig, Heinz	?	?	?
Horrer, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Hötten, ?	*Obergefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	?
Hottenträger, Alfred	?	Maintenance Section	?
Huber, Karl	?	3rd Battery	?
Huleja, Walter	?	2nd Battery	?
Hüngsberg, Heinz	?	Maintenance Section	?

Hupfauf, August	?	2nd Battery	?
Hütter, ?	*Oberkanonier*	1st Battery	?
Illberz, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Isen, Otto	?	3rd Battery	?
Issler, Emil	*Wachtmeister*	3rd Battery	?
Jagdmann, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	Driver
Jäger, Karl	?	3rd Battery	?
Jaroscheck, Ulf	?	?	?
Jaskiela, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Jaspers, Heinz	?	3rd Battery	?
Jugo, Jonny	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Jung, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Junker, Klaus	*Stabswachtmeister*	1st Battery	?
Juszack, Anton	?	?	?
Käfel, Toni	*Unteroffizier*	2nd Battery	?
Kamml, ?	*Oberschütze*	Headquarters Battery	?
Kapischke, ?	*Oberkanonier*	1st Battery	?
Karcher, Kurt	*Leutnant*	2nd Battery	?
Karut, Günther	?	1st Battery	?
Kehse, Herbert	?	Headquarters Battery	Battalion Clerk
Kiefer, Hermann	?	Maintenance Section	?
Kindermann, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Kläden, ?	*Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Kleber, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Kleem, Fritz	*Unteroffizier*	Headquarters Battery	Supply Sergeant
Klewitz, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	Medic
Kloth, ?	*Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	Assault-gun driver (killed in action on 1 August 1941)
Kneidl, Otto	?	1st Battery	?
Knieps, Michael	?	Maintenance Section	?
Knöppel, Helmut	*Kanonier*	3rd Battery	?
Kobl, Max	?	1st Battery	?
Köble, Anton	?	1st Battery	?
Kobrow, Werner	?	2nd Battery	?
Koch, Leonhard	*Gefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	?
Kochan, Erich	*Unteroffizier / Wachtmeister*	1st Battery	?
Köhler, ?	*Gefreiter*	?	?
Kohlhund, Johann	?	Maintenance Section	?
Koller, Johann	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	Prime mover driver
König, ?	*Obergefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Konnak, Bernhard	*Leutnant*	Headquarters, 1st and 3rd Batteries	?
Kraller, Franz	?	2nd Battery	?
Kramski, Franz	?	Maintenance Section	?
Kretschmann, Heinrich	*Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Kretschmer, Franz	Officer Candidate / *Leutnant*	Headquarters, 1st and 3rd Batteries	?
Krieg, ?	*Obergefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Kron, ?	*Kanonier*	Headquarters Battery	Motorcycle messenger
Krüger, Fritz	*Obergefreiter / Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Krüger, Gustav	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Kühl, Klaus	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Kunesch, ?	*Oberkanonier*	1st Battery	Motorcycle messenger
Kuntz, ?	*Obergefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	Orderly room
Kuntze, Eberhard	*Oberleutnant*	Headquarters and 2nd Batteries	Liaison Officer and Battery Commander
Kutter, Georg	?	?	?
Kyrer, Dr. Eduard	?	?	?
Laas, ?	*Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Lange, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Lange, ?	*Oberleutnant*	3rd Battery	?
Lässig, ?	*Oberkanonier*	1st Battery	?
Lauer, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Lehmann, ?	?	1st Battery	?
Leimbach, Georg	?	3rd Battery	?

Lemke, Rudolf	*Unteroffizier*	Headquarters Battery	?
Leuchten, Jakob	?	2nd Battery	?
Leukel, Karl	?	3rd Battery	?
Lichtenfeld, Magnus	*Unteroffizier*	Headquarters Battery	?
Liebe, Engelmar	*Leutnant*	3rd Battery	?
Liedtke, Hans	*Oberleutnant*	Headquarters and 1st Adjutant and Batteries	?
Liermann, Gerhard	*Unteroffizier*	2nd Battery	?
Lipp, ?	*Kanonier*	1st Battery	Killed in action on 8 September 1941
Loeck, Hermann	*Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Löffler, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	Assault-gun driver
Lohrmann, Kurt	*Unteroffizier*	2nd Battery	?
Lorenzen, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Lösch, Georg	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Ludwig, Rudolf	*Gefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	?
Madaus, Fritz	*Hauptwachtmeister*	1st Battery	?
Magg, Josef	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	Ammunition Driver
Maltzahn, Willi	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Marks, ?	*Wachtmeister*	2nd Battery	?
Maslowski, Hans	*Oberkanonier*	1st Battery	?
Matuschat, ?	*Wachtmeister*	2nd Battery	?
Maxheim, Willi	*Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Mayer, Emil	?	?	?
Mayer, Jürgen	?	?	?
Mayer, Wolfgang	?	3rd Battery	?
Messer, Karl	?	?	?
Michaelis, Hans-Joachim	*Gefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	?
Michel, ?	*Kanonier*	1st Battery	?
Milalkovits, Hans	?	3rd Battery	?
Moises, Alois	?	3rd Battery	?
Molkenthin, ?	*Gefreiter*		
Möller, Erich	?	1st Battery	?
Möller, Josef	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Möller, Otto	?	?	
Monzel, Alois	*Obergefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	?
Moosdiele, Johann	?	3rd Battery	?
Mörke, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Mühleisen, ?	*Wachtmeister*	2nd Battery	Killed in action
Mussler, Josef	*Unteroffizier*	Maintenance Section	?
Nerger, Heinrich	*Gefreiter*	3rd Battery	?
Neunert, Karl	*Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Neureiter, ?	*Kanonier*	1st Battery	?
Neureuther, Arthur	?	?	?
Neusens, ?	*Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Niederle, Josef	?	?	?
Niemann, ?	*Oberleutnant*	2nd Battery	?
Ninhaus, Hermann	?	2nd Battery	?
Noethen, Christian	*Unteroffizier* ?	3rd Battery	?
Northoff, Günther	?	3rd Battery	?
Ochs, Eugen	?	1st Battery	?
Opitz, Wilhelm	Officer Candidate (*Gefreiter*)	3rd Battery	?
Osthoff, Josef	*Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Osygus, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Paar, Eduard	?	3rd Battery	?
Paschke, Walter	*Oberfeldwebel*	Headquarters Battery	Mess Sergeant
Pätzold, Kurt	?	Maintenance Section	?
Paul, Heinz	*Gefreiter*	3rd Battery	?
Paulus, Richard	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Pawolleck, Richard	?	Maintenance Section	?
Petry, Willi	Officer Candidate (*Unteroffizier*) ?	3rd Battery	?
Pfeiffer, Hans	*Funkmeister*	Headquarters Battery	?
Pfeuffer, Otto	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Piel, ?	?	1st Battery	?
Pietsch, Herbert	*Wachtmeister*	2nd Battery	?

Pippig, Heinz	*Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Platzer, Martin	*Gefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	Vehicle mechanic
Plottnik, ?	*Kanonier*	1st Battery	Driver
Pohl, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Pomp, ?	?	1st Battery	?
Popp, Gerhard	?	?	Missing in action
Pothoff, ?	*Feuerwerker*	Headquarters Battery	?
Prahm, Hans	*Leutnant*	2nd Battery	?
Preußer, Werner	*Leutnant / Oberleutnant*	Headquarters and 1st Batteries	?
Prezler, Erich	*Gefreiter / Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Pries, Friedel	*Obergefreiter / Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Prosetzki, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Radtke, Fritz	*Unteroffizier*	Headquarters Battery	Mess Sergeant
Ragger, Kaspar	?	2nd Battery	?
Rakow, Fritz	?	?	?
Raydt, ?	*Unteroffizier / Wachtmeister*	1st Battery	?
Rebhahn, Willi	?	?	?
Reetz, ?	*Gefreiter* ?	1st Battery	?
Rehbein, Herbert	*Wachtmeister / Leutnant*	1st, 2nd and 3rd Batteries	?
Reinhardt, ?	*Unteroffizier*	Headquarters Battery	?
Reinstädler, Josef	*Oberleutnant*	Headquarters and 1st Batteries	?
de la Renotière, Gerald	*Oberleutnant*	Headquarters Battery	Battery Commander
Rettich, Ernst	?	?	?
Reuter, Karl	*?*	3rd Battery	?
Richter, ?	*Feldwebel*	1st Battery	Medical personnel
Riecker, Albert	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Riede, Ernst	*Unteroffizier*	Headquarters Battery	?
Riedel, Fritz	*Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Rist, Karl	*Unteroffizier / Feldwebel*	3rd Battery	?
Röder, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	Ammunition driver. Died on 23 June 1942 as a result of wounds suffered on 11 June 1942
Rohloff, Hermann	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Rohwedder, Hans	?	?	?
Rölz, Adolf	?	1st Battery	?
Roos, Edmund	?	1st Battery	?
Rost, Paul	?	3rd Battery	?
Rothwangel, Josef	?	1st Battery	?
Rüdiger, ?	*Kanonier*	1st Battery	Loader. Killed in action on 10 June 1942
Rüdiger, ?	*Leutnant*	3rd Battery	?
Rütt, ?	*Stabsgefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	Cobbler
Sabrowsky, Rolf	*Kanonier / Gefreiter*	3rd Battery	?
Safoschnig, ?	*Wachtmeister*	1st Battery	?
Sakowitsch, Hans	?	Maintenance Section	?
Salamon, Werner	*Leutnant*	2nd and 3rd Batteries	Platoon Leader
Sauer, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Sawatzki, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Schade, Peter	*Gefreiter*	3rd Battery	?
Schäfer, Alois	*Kanonier*	1st Battery	Assault-gun driver
Schäfer, Heinrich	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Schaff, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Schaffranek, Rudolf	*Kriegsveraltungsrat*	1st Battery	Maintenance Officer
Schardin, Benno	*Unteroffizier / Wachtmeister*	3rd Battery	?
Scheeler, Edgar	*Obergefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Scheibe, ?	*Unteroffizier*	2nd Battery	?
Schenkelberger, Ludwig	?	1st Battery	Assault-gun driver
Scheuermann, ?	*?*	?	?
Schiestl, Alfred	Officer Candidate (*Unteroffizier*)	3rd Battery	?
Schlabs, Reinhold	*Gefreiter / Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?

Schleicher, Rolf	*Gefreiter / Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Schlemminger, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	Killed in action on 25 September 1941
Schlenska, Emanuel	*Unteroffizier*	2nd Battery	?
Schmidhäuser, Erich	*Wachtmeister*	2nd Battery	?
Schmidt, ?	*Stabswachtmeister*	1st Battery	?
Schmidt, Andreas	*Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	Noncommissioned officer for personal-demand items
Schmidt, Karl	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Schmidt, Lothar	?	?	?
Schmidt, Paul	?	3rd Battery	?
Schmidt, Willi	?	2nd Battery	?
Schmitt, Werner	?	1st Battery	?
Schnaus, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Schneider, ?	*Kanonier*	1st Battery	?
Schneider, ?	*Leutnant*	2nd Battery	Killed in action
Schneider, ?	*Oberkanonier*	1st Battery	?
Schnippert, Karl	?	?	?
Schork, Erich	?	?	?
Schramm, Fritz	?	?	?
Schrödel, Fritz	*Oberwachtmeister*	1st Battery	?
Schubert, Heinrich	?	?	?
Schubhart, Karl	?	?	?
Schulmayer, Willi	*Obergefreiter / Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Schultz, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Schumacher, Arthur	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Schwab, Rudolf	?	?	?
Schwantke, Paul	*Gefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	Assistant armorer
Schwarz, Fritz	*Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Schymosch, ?	*Kanonier*	1st Battery	Assault-gun driver
Seebauer, Alois	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Seitz, Karl	*Leutnant / Oberleutnant*	Headquarters and 1st Batteries	?
Siebenhandl, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	Assistant Mess Sergeant
Singelmann, Karl	*Oberkanonier / Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Sinnig, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Sinzinger, ?	*Stabsgefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	?
Skodell, Heinrich	*Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	Gunner
Skorpil, Rudolf	*Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Smolka, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	Motorcycle messenger
Sofsky, Kurt	*Unteroffizier*	?	?
Sörgel, Gerhard			
Späth, Fritz	?	?	?
Speidel, ?	*Oberwachtmeister*	3rd Battery	?
Spielmann, Johann	*Leutnant / Oberleutnant*	1st Battery	Battery Commander
Sprott, Karl	?	3rd Battery	?
Stademann, Hermann	?	3rd Battery	?
Stammen, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Staude, Hans	*Unteroffizier*	Headquarters Battery	Clerk
Steinwachs, Heinz	*Hauptmann*	Headquarters Battery	Battalion Commander
Stenzel, Ernst	?	3rd Battery	?
Stock, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Stolp, Walter	*Unteroffizier*	Headquarters Battery	?
Strohäcker, Karl	?	3rd Battery	?
Strohal, Eberhard	*Gefreiter / Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Stuff, Josef	?	?	?
Sudbrink, ?	*Gefreiter* ?	1st Battery	Assault-gun driver. Killed in action on 16 August 1942
Tams, Hans	*Gefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	?
Teriete, Heinrich	Officer candidate (*Wachtmeister*)	3rd Battery	?
Teschner, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	?
Thees, Hermann	?	?	?

Thiel, ?	*Unteroffizier / Hauptwachtmeister*	1st Battery	?
Thümen, ? von	*Kanonier*	1st Battery	Medic
Thumser, Karl	?	1st Battery	?
Tillwick, Heinrich	*Gefreiter*	3rd Battery	?
Titus, Kurt	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	?
Traub, ?	*Gefreiter*	1st Battery	Killed in action on 25 September 1941
Trottenberg, Paul	?	Maintenance Section	
Tschöcke, ?	*Kanonier*	1st Battery	Assault-gun driver
Ulbricht, Hellmut	*Leutnant / Oberleutnant*	Headquarters and 1st Batteries	?
Vogler, ?	*Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Vonbrunn, ?	?	Headquarters Battery	Cook
Wacker Franz	*Obergefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	Cook
Wagner, Klaus	*Leutnant*	1st Battery	?
Walcher, Josef	?	?	?
Walkenhorst, Fritz	?	2nd Battery	Weapons officer
Weber, Fridolin	*Obergefreiter / Unteroffizier*	3rd Battery	?
Weber, Karl	?	3rd Battery	?
Wedler, Karl	*Unteroffizier / Wachtmeister*	1st Battery	?
Wegelin, Hans	*Leutnant / Oberleutnant*	Headquarters, 1st and 3rd Batteries	?
Wegener, Alfred	?	2nd Battery	Assault-gun driver. Killed in action.
Weick, Rudolf	?	?	?
Weidlich, ?	*Unteroffizier*	1st Battery	?
Weinberger, Willi	*Obergefreiter*	Headquarters Battery	?
Weller, ?	*Oberkanonier*	1st Battery	?
Welz, Werner	?	1st Battery	?

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[Foto via Renotière]

Training on the assault guns started for the officers of the battalion in November 1940 at the home station of the *VI./Art.Lehr-Rgt.*
• Beim *VI./Art.Lehr-Rgt.* beginnt im November 1940 die Geschütz-Ausbildung für die Offiziere der StuG.Abt. 197.

The movement to the first round of instructional gunnery for the *1./StuG.Abt. 197* at a training area around Jüterbog. • Auf der Fahrt zum ersten Belehrungsschießen der *1./StuG.Abt. 197* auf dem Übungsgelände bei Jüterbog.

[Foto via Schlabs]

[Foto via Zimmermann]

A training vehicle of the *6./StuG.Ers. und Ausb.Abt. 200* in Schweinfurt in the winter of 1940/1941. This battalion was responsible for providing replacements to *StuG.Abt. 197*. • Ausbildungsfahrzeug der 6./StuG.Ers. und Ausb.Abt. 200 in Schweinfurt im Winter 1940/41. Die *Stu.Gesch.Ers.u.Ausb.Abt. 200* ist für den Personalersatz der *StuG.Abt. 197* zuständig.

Combat gunnery being conducted by the *1./StuG.Abt. 197* at Gallwitz Hill and Fort Ziethen (near Jüterbog) in January 1941.
• Gefechtsschießen der *1./StuG.Abt. 197* in der Nähe von Jüterbog bei der Gallwitz-Höhe und Fort-Ziethen im Januar 1941.

[Fotos via Peters]

The newly accepted "D" Gun of the *1./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197* still has a double set of insignia. See the left-hand mud guard and the front armor of the superstructure. • Das neu übernommene D-Geschütz der 1./197 weist noch eine doppelte Kennzeichnung auf. Siehe linker Kettenfender und auf der Frontpanzerung.

The "C" Gun on its return from battalion gunnery. • Das C-Geschütz kehrt vom Abteilungsschießen zurück.

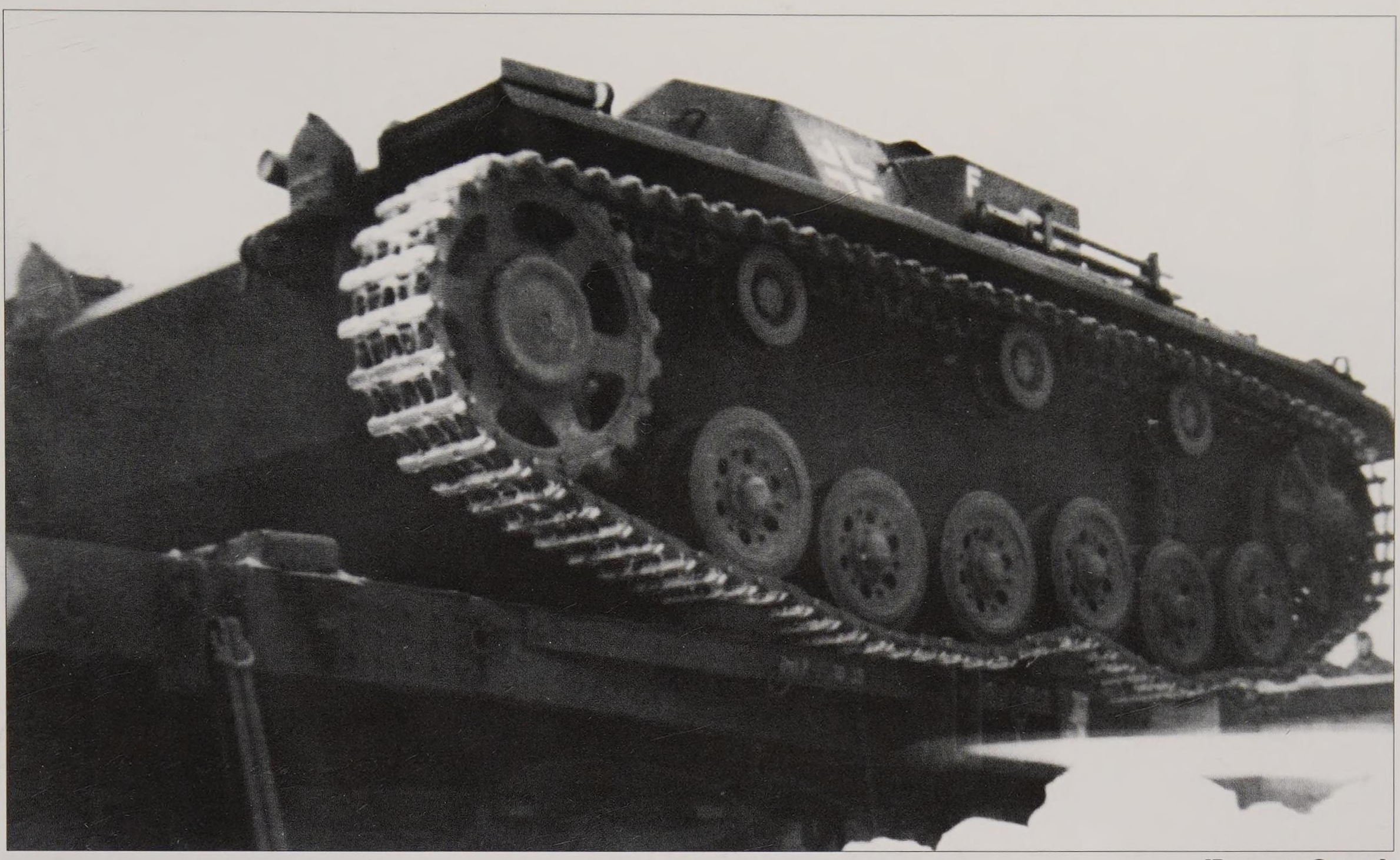
[Fotos via Peters]

Loading the *3./StuG.Abt.197* on a transport train at the Zinna Forest (vicinity of Jüterbog) on 6 February 1941. The movement was headed to the new garrison city of Brieg in Silesia. • Verladung der *3./StuG.Abt.197* in Forst Zinna bei Jüterbog am 6.2.1941. Ziel ist die Garnissonstadt Brieg in Schlesien.

[Fotos via Caesar]

[Fotos via Caesar]

The "E" Gun of the *3./ StuG.Abt.197* rolls onto the rail car. • Das E-Geschütz der *3./StuG.Abt.197* rollt auf den Transportwaggon.



[Fotos via Caesar]

The assault gun moves carefully across the ramp and onto the car. The drivers had to know their craft in this instance. • Vorsichtig fährt das Geschütz über die Kopframpe auf den Waggon. Hier ist Maßarbeit von den Fahrern gefordert.

Arrival of the train in Brieg. • Ankunft des Transportes in Brieg.

[Foto via Peters]

The unloading of the train took place in a heavy snowfall. • Die Ausladung erfolgt bei heftigem Schneetreiben.

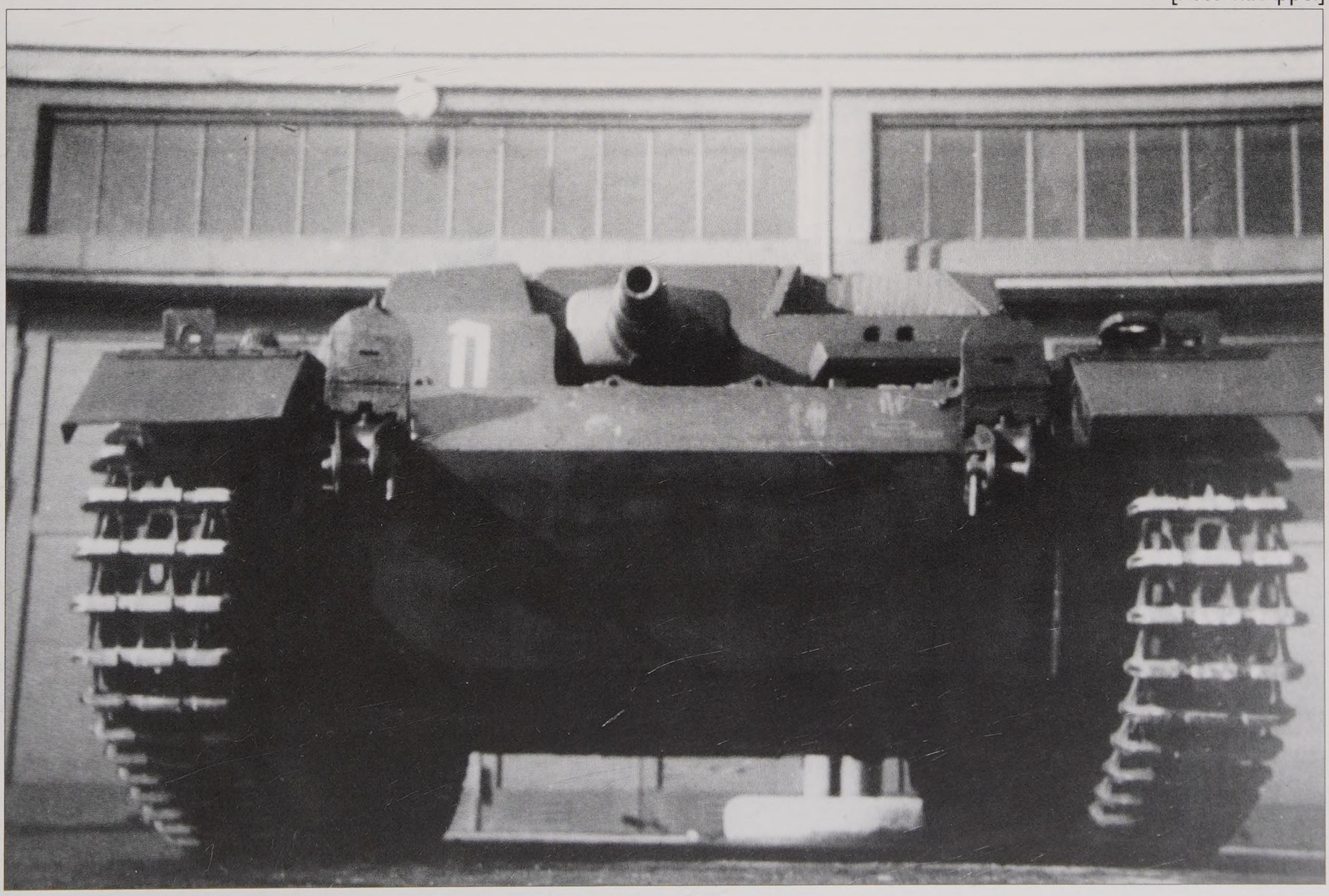
[Fotos via Caesar]

[Foto via Peters]

Arrival of elements of the ammunition section in Brieg. • Ankunft von Teilen der Munitionsstaffel in Brieg.

The "C" Gun of the *3./ StuG.Abt.197* on display in front of vehicle bays at the Mudra Military Facilities in Brieg. • Vor den Fahrzeughallen der Mudrakaserne in Brieg präsentiert sich das C-Geschütz der *3./StuG.Abt.197*.

[Foto via Appel]



Acceptance of the new platoon-leader vehicles (Sd.Kfz. 253). • Übernahme der neuen gepanzerten Zugführerwagen (Sd.Kfz. 253).

[Fotos via Peters]

On 11 February 1941, *Generalleutnant* Theißen visited *StuG.Abt.197*. For the purposes of the visit, the battalion's 1st Battery assembled on the parade field. • Am 11.2.1941 besichtigt Generalleutnant Theißen die *StuG.Abt.197*. Hierzu ist die 1. Batterie geschlossen auf dem Exerzierplatz aufgefahren.

[Fotos via Peters]

[Fotos via Peters]

The vehicles of the 1st Battery. • Die Fahrzeuge der 1. Batterie.

[Foto via Busch]

Movement of the Headquarters Battery into the snowed-over Bober-Katzbach Mountain Range. The vehicles have received the battalion insignia - the *Kanonenadler* ("Cannon Eagle"). • Fahrt von Teilen der Stabsbatterie in das verschneite Bober-Katzbach-Gebirge. Die Fahrzeuge sind nun mit dem Abteilungswappen, dem *Kanonenadler* gekennzeichnet.

This platoon-leader vehicle has slid off an iced-over section of road. • Auf vereister Wegstrecke ist dieser Zugführerwagen abgerutscht.

[Foto via Preußer]

[Foto via Peters]

Members of the ammunition section perform maintenance on one of the ammunition vehicles (Sd.Kfz. 252). • Angehörige der Munitionsstaffel beim technischen Dienst an einem derMunitionsfahrzeuge (Sd.Kfz. 252).

One of the platoon-leader vehicles of the 2nd Battery in Brieg. • Einer der Zugführerwagen der 2. Batterie in Brieg.

[Foto via Schmidhäuser]

Two crewmembers of the "D" Gun of the 2nd Battery (*Wachtmeister* Schmidhäuser) and a battery motorcycle messenger during a break in an exercise. • Zwei Besatzungsmitglieder des D-Geschützes der 2. Batterie von Wachtmeister Schmidhäuser und ein Batterie-Kradmelder bei einer Übungspause.

An assault gun from the 1st Battery (*Leutnant* Spielmann's platoon) in the snowy woods of Silesia. • Ein Geschütz der 1. Batterie (Zug Lt. Spielmann) in den verschneiten schlesischen Wäldern.

[Foto via Peters]

[Foto via Caesar]

Arrival of elements of the 3rd Battery at Wischau (near Brünn) in February 1942. In their native costumes, the children of the Serbian populace greet the soldiers. • Ankunft von Teilen der 3. Batterie in Wischau bei Brünn im Februar 1942. Kinder der Sorbischen Bevölkerung begrüßen die Soldaten in ihrer Landestracht.

Unteroffizier Neusens and *Wachtmeister* Teriete establish "contact" with the female half of the populace. • Uffz. Neusens und Wachtmeister Teriete bei der Kontaktaufnahme zur weiblichen Bevölkerung.

[Foto via Caesar]

Unit training consisting of elements from all three batteries under the command of *Oberleutnant* Goewe, the Battery Commander of the 3rd Battery, in the vicinity of Kutscherau. • Verbandsübung aus Teilen aller drei Batterien unter Führung von Oblt. Goewe (Chef 3. Batterie) bei Kutscherau.

[Foto via Caesar]

[Foto via Caesar]

A motorcycle messenger has gotten stuck in the stony ground. The crew from the "Z1" Platoon-Leader vehicle help push. • Ein Kradfahrer hat sich in dem steinigen Geröll festgefahren. Die Besatzung des Zugführerwagen Z1 hilft beim Schieben.

[Foto via Schmidhäuser]

A gun from the 2nd Battery moves quickly during a change of position. • Ein Geschütz der 2. Batterie in schneller Fahrt beim Stellungswechsel.

This gun from the 3rd Battery is an example of excellent camouflage technique in a firing position. • Vorbildlich getarnt steht dieses Geschütz der *3./ StuG.Abt.197* in der Feuerstellung.

As can plainly be seen, the first warming rays of the sun are being enjoyed by this crew. • Die ersten wämenden Sonnenstrahlen werden von den Besatzungen sichtlich genossen.

[Fotos via Caesar]

Training was conducted at the battery, platoon, section and individual level. • Geübt wird der gesamte taktische Batterie-Einsatz, aber auch das Vorgehen des einzelnen Sturmgeschützzuges bzw. Halbzuges.

[Fotos via Caesar]

An exercise employing the "dismount" noncommissioned officer, who was intended to accompany the assault gun as it moved through the terrain and direct fires by means of his backpack radio. This concept proved untenable in actual combat operations and was discontinued. • Einsatzübung mit dem *ausbootbaren* Funk-Unteroffizier, der mit dem Tornisterfunkgerät als Feuerleiter die Geschütze im Gelände begleiten soll. Dieses Konzept hat sich jedoch im tatsächlichen Kriegseinsatz nicht bewährt und wird nicht weiterverfolgt.

[Fotos via Caesar]

The end of the exercise has been announced, and everyone looks forward to returning to base. • Das Ende der Übung ist angesagt und alle freuen sich auf die Rückkehr in die saubere Kaserne.

The guns were loaded on trains at Kojetin on 8 March 1941 and transported to Brieg. • In Kojetin werden am 8.3.1941 die Geschütze auf die Bahnwaggons verladen und nach Brieg transportiert.

[Fotos via Caesar]

The 3rd Battery moves cross-country at the Lamsdorf Training Area (vicinity of Falkenberg). • Geländefahrten der 3. Batterie auf dem Truppenübungsplatz Lamsdorf bei Falkenberg.

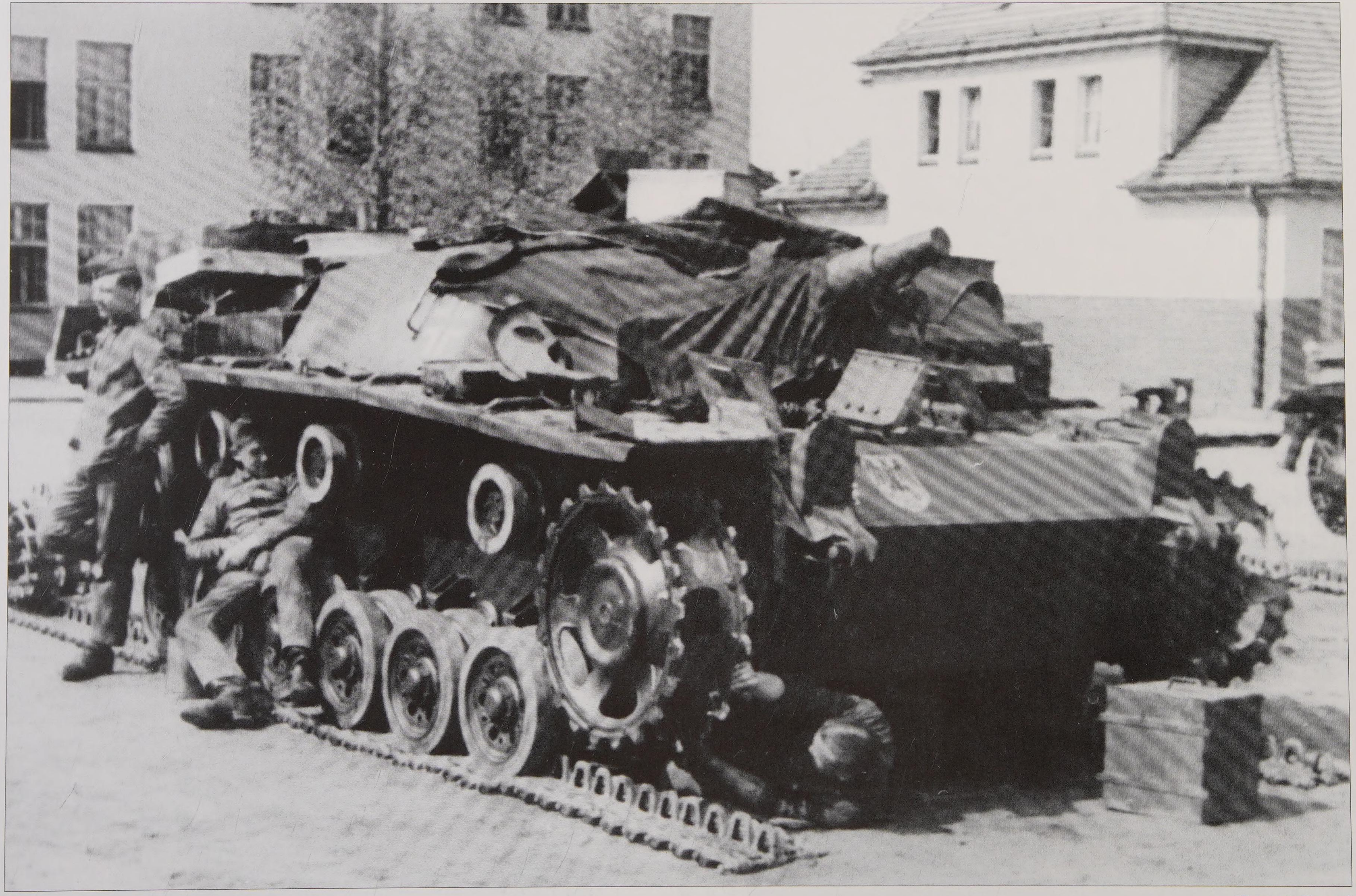
The "F" Gun crosses a rise. • Das F-Geschütz beim Überfahren einer Kuppe.

While moving downhill, the battalion insignia on the guns can be seen to good advantage. The 3rd Battery had its *Kanonenadler* on a yellow crest. • Beim Abwärtsfahren ist das Abteilungswappen gut zu sehen. Die dritte Batterie führt den Kanonenadler auf einem gelben Wappenschild.

This photograph of the "A" Gun of the 1st Battery was taken at the Oppeln Training Area. The assault gun dislays the new form of the letter next to the battalion crest (white crest = 1st Battery). • Auf dem Truppenübungsplatz bei Oppeln entstand diese Aufnahme des A-Geschützes der *1./StuG.Abt. 197*. Das Geschütz zeigt die neue Form des Buchstabens links neben dem Wappenschild (weißer Wappenschild = 1. Batterie).

[Foto via Renotière]

The Maintenance Section prepares for vehicle inspections on 22 March 1941. • Der I-Trupp bei den Vorbereitungen zum großen Fahrzeugappell am 22.3.1941.



[Foto via Peters]

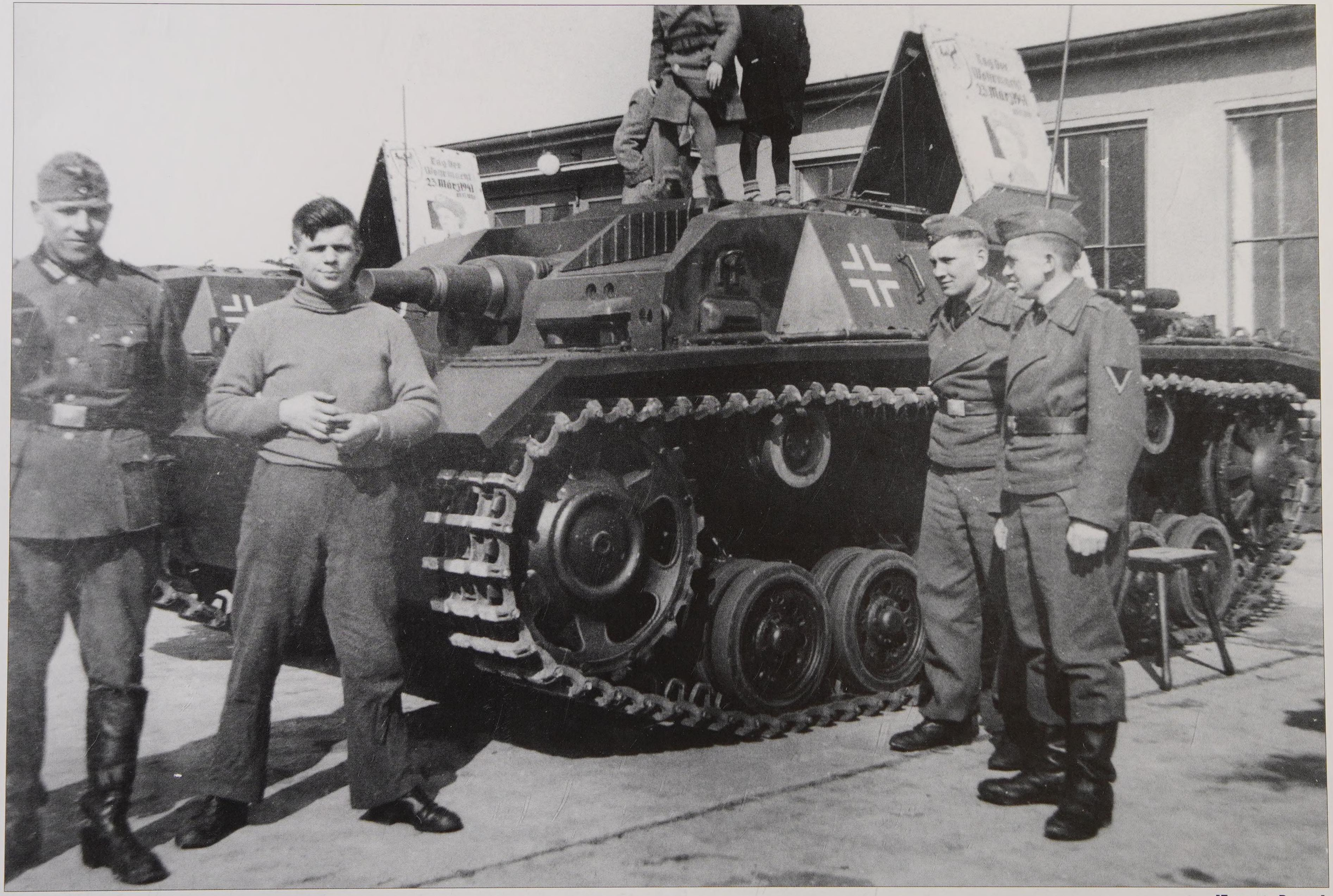
Maintenance is being conducted on the "F" Gun. Much time was spent caring for and maintaining the valuable vehicle. • Technischer Dienst am F-Geschütz. Für die Pflege und Wartung der wertvollen Fahrzeuge wird sehr viel Zeit aufgewendet.

[Foto via Preußer]

When heavy lifting was required, there was a *Famo* 18-ton prime mover with a mounted crane. The vehicle belonged to the Headquarters Battery (green crest = Headquarters Battery). • Für schwere Hebearbeiten steht eine 18 t Zugmaschine mit aufmontiertem Kran zur Verfügung. Das Fahrzeug gehört zur Stabsbatterie (grüner Wappen-schild = Stabskompanie).

After the vehicles had been inspected and approved by *Kriegsverwaltungsrat* Schaffranek, there was a great deal of praise. • Nach dem Fahrzeugappell und der Abnahme durch *Kriegsverwaltungsrat* Schaffranek gibt es Lob für die gepflegten Fahrzeuge.

[Foto via Mook]



[Foto via Peters]

Armed Forces Day on 23 March 1941. The local population has been invited to the military facilities to view them and the battalion. • Tag der Wehrmacht am 23. März 1941. Die Bevölker-

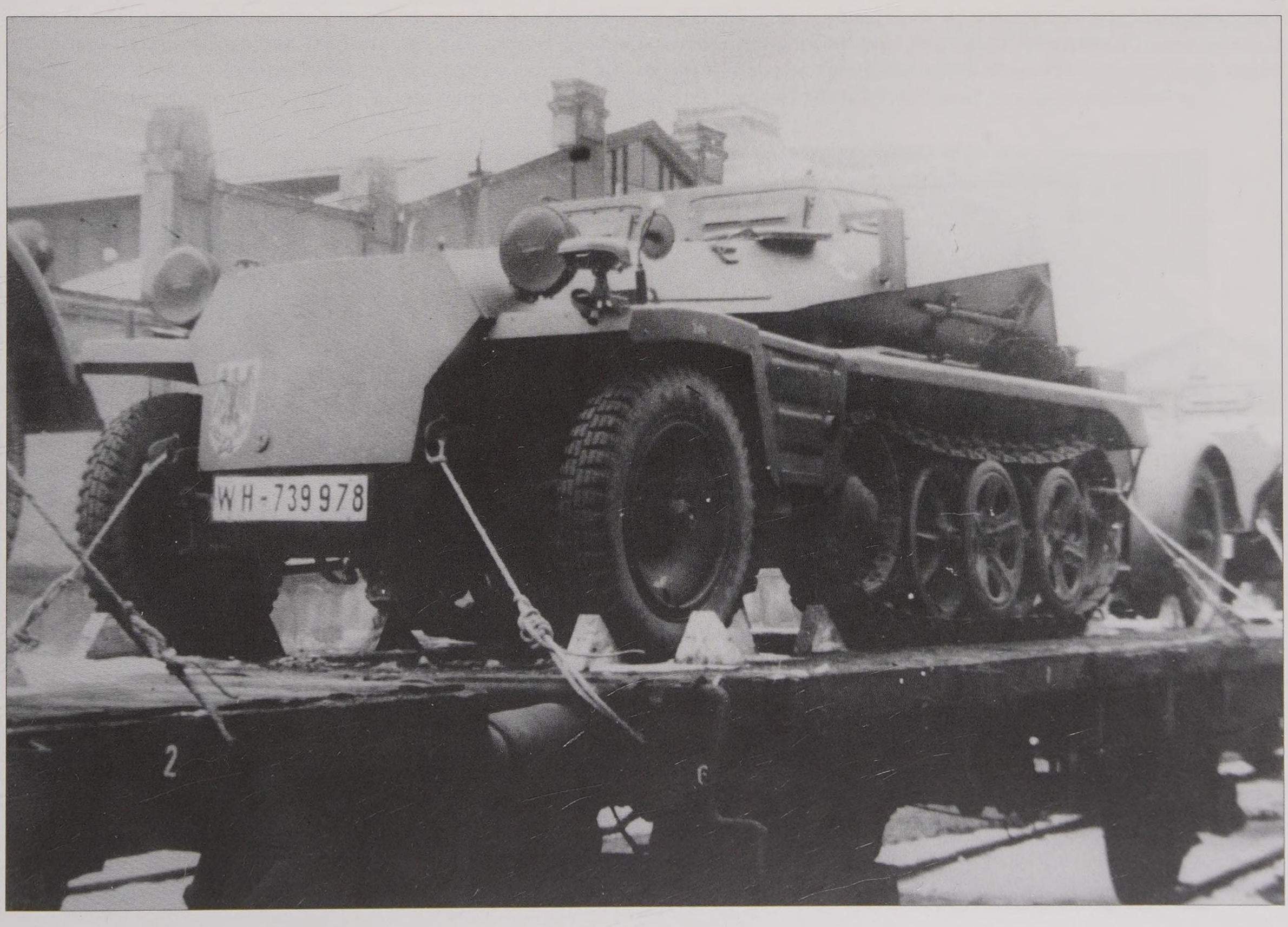
On 26 March 1941, a so-called "assault battery" was put on display. It was formed by the 3rd Battery, with additional vehicles from the 1st. • Am 26. März 1941 wird bei Oppeln eine so genannte *Sturmbatterie* vorgeführt. Sie wird gestellt von der *3./StuG.Abt. 197* in Ergänzung von Fahrzeugen der 1./ StuG.Abt. 197.

The crews of the platoon-leader vehicles have formed up in front of their vehicles. • Die Besatzungen der Zugführerwagen sind vor den Fahrzeugen angetreten.

After being reviewed by *General der Infanterie* Geyer, a few snapshots were taken for family albums. • Nach der Besichtigung durch General der Infanterie Geyer werden einige Schnappschüsse für das Familienalbum gemacht.

[Fotos via Scott]

The battalion was ordered to be ready to move by 30 March 1941, but it did not load on trains until 7 April 1941 due to a shortage of rail-lift capacity on the part of the railway system. Most of the soldiers still did not know what the destination was. • Die Abteilung muss bereits am 30. März 1941 die Marschbereitschaft melden, doch wegen fehlender Transportmöglichkeit verlädt die Abteilung erst am 7. April 1941 in Brieg auf die bereitgestellten Bahnwaggons. Noch ist das Ziel für die meisten Soldaten unbekannt.



[Foto via Preußer]

Major Christ, the Battalion Commander, during the rail movement toward Austria. • Major Christ, Kommandeur der StuG.Abt. 197, während des Bahntransportes in Richtung Österreich.

Final checks of the equipment by the Headquarters Battery prior to moving off the trains in Karlsdorf (Austria). The Battery Commander, *Oberleutnant* Renotiére, and his long-time driver, Gerhard Busch. The Battery First Sergeant inspects everything thoroughly. • Letzte Kontrolle der Ausrüstung nach dem Ausladen der Stabskompanie in Karlsdorf/Österreich. Der Chef Oblt. de la Renotière und sein bewährter Fahrer Gerhard Busch. Der Hauptwachtmeister sieht sich die Sache genau an.

[Foto via Renotière]

[Foto via Rist]

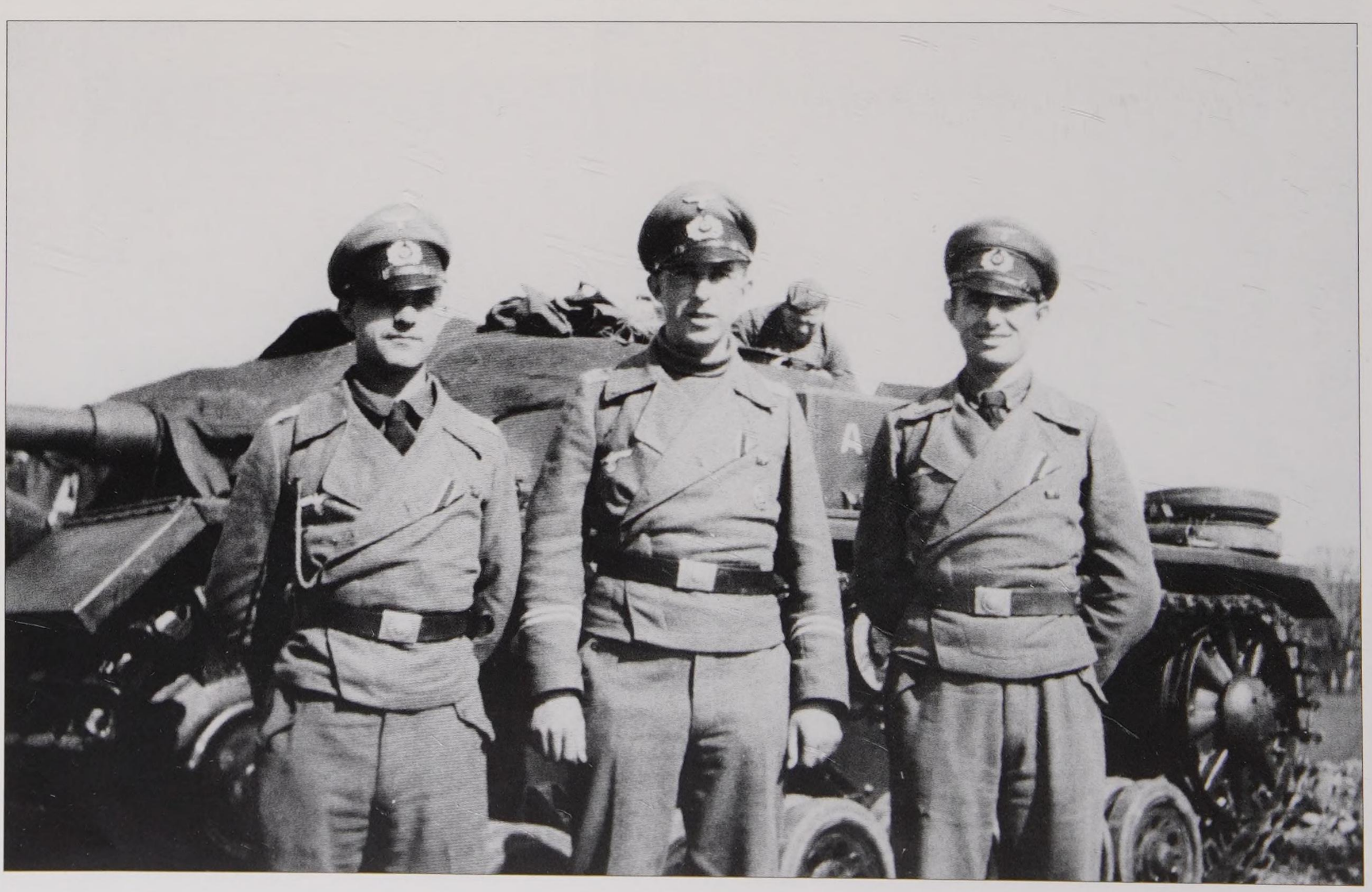
Waiting for orders to move out. *Unteroffizier* Karl Rist of the 3rd Battery in front of his Horch Kfz. 15. • Warten auf den Abmarschbefehl. Uffz. Karl Rist (*3./StuG.Abt. 197*) vor seinem Horch Kfz. 15.

The orders come and the movement in the direction of Yugoslavia starts. • Es geht los. Der Marsch in Richtung Jugoslawien beginnt.

[Foto via Preußer]

The 2nd Battery has closed up and awaits orders to move in the direction of the border. • Die 2. Batterie ist aufgefahren und wartet auf dem Marschbefehl in Richtung Grenze.

The Battery First Sergeant - known as the *Spieß* (the "skewer" or ""spit") among the common soldiers of the battery - with two of his junior noncommissioned officers before the departure. • Der Hauptfeldwebel (Spieß) mit zwei seiner Unterführer kurz vor dem Abrücken.



[Foto via Caesar]

The first obstacles were encountered right at the beginning of the march toward Yugoslavia. • Bereits der Anmarsch zur jugoslawischen Grenze bietet die ersten Hindernisse.

[Foto via Caesar]

The "D" Gun of the 3rd Battery fords a water obstacle. • Das D-Geschütz der 3. Batterie beim Waten

[Foto via Caesar]

Final preparations in Ehrenhausen. The vehicles are topped off and inspected one more time. • Letzte Vorbereitungen in Ehrenhausen. Die Geschütze werden nochmals betankt und gewartet.

[Foto via Busch]

Leutnant Ulbricht conducts route reconnaissance. *Mörser-Abteilung* 808 is blocking the way. • Leutnant Ulbricht bei der Erkundung der Marschstrecke. Die Mörser-Abteilung 808 versperrt den Weg.

An assault gun of the 1st Battery at the approach to the bridge at Mureck. • Ein Geschütz der 1. Batterie an der Brückenauffahrt in Mureck.

[Foto via Tams]

The 3rd Battery rolls across the Mur at Mureck. The river forms the border with Yugoslavia. • Die 3. Batterie rollt in Mureck über die Mur. Der Fluss bildet die Grenze nach Jugoslawien.

The battalion rolled toward Rohitsch in a long column. • In langer Kolonne rollt die Abteilung in Richtung Rohitsch.

[Fotos via Caesar]

[Fotos via Caesar]

A view of the combat elements of the 3rd Battery. The roads were completely congested and had been badly damaged by the formations that had already preceded these

The supply elements of the 3rd Battery at the end of the column. • Die Versorgungsteile der 3. Batterie am Ende der Kolonne.

The enemy fled more quickly than expected. As a result, the assault guns moved through the Croatian part of the country without any enemy contact. • Der Gegner flieht schneller als erwartet und so rollen die Sturmgeschütze ohne Feindberührung durch den kroatischen Landesteil.

[Fotos via Schlabs and Peters]

Maintenance halt to check oil and coolant. • Technischer Halt zum Überprüfen des Ölstandes und Auffüllen des Kühlwassers.

[Fotos via Nerger]

The battalion moved through numerous serpentines to get to the Save on 14 April 1941. • In zahlreichen Serpentinen geht es am 14. April 1941 zur Save hinunter.

The 3rd Battery has reached the crossing point over the Save west of Agram (Zagreb). • Die 3. Batterie hat den Save-Übergang westlich von Agram (Zagreb) erreicht.

[Foto via Caesar]

Rest in the small village of Volavje. The Croatian populace had a friendly disposition toward the Germans. • Rast in dem kleinen Ort Volavje. Die kroatische Bevölkerung ist bemerkenswert deutschfreundlich eingestellt.

[Foto via Caesar]

[Foto via Schmidhäuser]

Advance of the 2nd Battery. Up front, in the Battery Commander's vehicle, is the Battery Commander, *Oberleutnant* Fuhr.
• Vormarsch der 2. Batterie. Vorne im Batterieführerwagen der Batterie-Chef Oblt. Fuhr.

Close-up of the Battery Officer Vehicle. Of interest is the use of an *MG 08/15* on the vehicle. • Nahaufnahme des BF-Wagens. Interessant ist die Verwendung des MG 08/15 auf dem Fahrzeug.

[Foto via Peters]

[Foto via Caesar]

A battalion halt at Cvetkovic. The vehicles of the 3rd Battery have closed up. • Halt der Abteilung bei Cvetkovic. Die Geschütze der 3. Batterie sind in Reihe aufgefahren.

Maintenance work within the 2nd Battery. In front is Kanonier August Beck. • Wartungsarbeiten bei der 2. Batterie. Davor stehend Kanonier August Beck

[Fotos via Beck]

The 2nd Battery holds formation. • Die 2. Batterie in Reih und Glied.

The motorcycle-messenger section of the 2nd Battery. The motorcycles and the ammunition trailer on the left have been covered in a fine coat of dust. • Die Kradstaffel der 2. Batterie. Die Kräder und der links sichtbare Mun-Anhänger sind mit einer sehr hellen Staubschicht überzogen.

[Foto via Caesar]

Idyllic set-up for getting a night's rest. The Battery Commander of the 3rd Battery, *Oberleutnant* Goewe, takes it easy in a hammock. The thick coat of dust on the vehicles can easily be seen, since the vehicles appear almost white. • Idyllisches Einrichten zur Nachtruhe bei der *3./StuG.Abt. 197*. Der Batterie-Chef Oblt. Goewe macht es sich in der Hängematte bequem.

[Foto via Schlabs]

Karlstadt (Karlovac). The assault guns of the battalion assembled in a meadow outside of the city. As a result of the extremely quick movement and the bad roads, the rubber roadwheel rims have suffered tremendously. • Karlstadt (Karlovac) ist erreicht. Auf einer Wiese vor der Stadt fahren die Geschütze der Abteilung auf. Durch die enorm schnelle Fahrt und die schlechten Straßen hat der Gummibelag der Laufrollen stark gelitten.

Since Serbia had capitulated in the meantime, there was no longer any prospect of combat operations and maintenance on the vehicles was ordered. • Da Serbien zwischenzeitlich kapituliert hat, herrscht keine Kriegsbedrohung mehr und für die Fahrzeuge wird technischer Dienst befohlen.

[Foto via Peters]

[Foto via Caesar]

The maintenance section and vehicle mechanics had their hands full. Personal equipment was also looked after. *Unteroffizier* Neusens darns his socks. • Der I-Trupp und die Panzerwarte der Besatzungen haben nun alle Hände voll zu tun. Aber auch die persönliche Ausrüstung kann wieder in Ordnung gebracht werden. Uffz. Neusens beim Socken stopfen.

[Foto via Caesar]

Weapons are cleaned to musical accompaniment in the 3rd Battery. • Waffenreinigen mit musikalischer Begleitung bei der 3. Batterie.

Oberleutnant Liedtke (left) in conversation with the Battery Commander of the 1st Battery, *Oberleutnant* Brinke. • Oberleutnant Liedtke (links) im Gespräch mit dem Chef der 1./StuG.Abt. 197 Oberleutnant Brinke.

[Foto via Renotière]

[Foto via Schlabs]

Leutnant Wollermann in the Z3 Platoon Leader Vehicle. He was killed in Russia on 26 June 1941. • Lt. Wollermann im Zugführerwagen Z3. Er fällt am 26.6.1941 in Russland.

[Foto via Peters]

Orders to return to Austria have arrived and the crews prepare for their departure. • Der Befehl zur Rückkehr nach Österreich ist eingetroffen und die Besatzungen machen sich zur Abfahrt bereit

[Foto via Beck]

An assault gun of the 2nd Battery got stuck on the side of a road. • Abseits der Straße hat sich ein Geschütz der 2. Batterie festgefahren.

Before crossing into Austria, the vehicles were cleaned. • Vor dem Überschreiten der österreichischen Grenze werden die Fahrzeuge von Staub und Schmutz gesäubert.

[Foto via Nerger]

[Foto via Schmidhäuser]

The 2nd Battery on the way to Carinthia. • Die 2. Batterie auf dem Rückweg nach Kärnten.

[Foto via Renotière]

Last guidance from *Major* Christ to *Oberleutnant* Renotière for the return of the Headquarters Battery to Austria. • Letzte Anweisungen von Major Christ an Oblt. Renotière für die Rückführung der Stabskompanie nach Österreich.

An excursion by the officers to the mountains around Villach. • Ausflug der Offiziere in die Bergwelt bei Villach

[Foto via Preußer]

[Foto via Preußer]

The assault guns are ready to be loaded on trains in front of an alpine panorama. On 9 May 1941, the battalion was transported to Glatz in Silesia. • Vor dem Alpenpanorama stehen die Geschütze zur Verladung bereit.
Am 9. Mai 1941 erfolgt der Abtransport der Abteilung nach Glatz in Schlesien.

[Foto via Nerger]

Kanonier Nerger on an Sd.Kfz. 252 Ammunition Carrier that has just been cleaned. • Kanonier Nerger auf einem frisch geputzten Sd.Kfz. 252 Mun-Transporter.

[Foto via Peters]

30 May 1941: The battalion detrained at Reichshof (Rzeszow) and then moved through Sokolow to its assembly area in the vicinity of the former Polish-Soviet border. • 30. Mai 1941. Die Abteilung wird in Rzeszow (Reichshof) ausgeladen und rollt dann über Sokolow in ihren Bereitstellungsraum in der Nähe der ehemals polnisch - russischen Grenze.

The batteries were directed to various quartering areas. The battery signposts were posted along the sides of the roads to orient the march columns. Here: The 3rd Battery. • Die Batterien werden in verschiedene Unterkunftsräume eingewiesen. Zur Orientierung der Kolonnen sind die Stander der Batterien (hier *3./StuG.Abt. 197*) am Straßenrand aufgestellt.

[Foto via Appel]

On 20 June 1941, the batteries moved up closer to the Bug River into new assembly areas. The 1st Battery was located in "Hand Towel" Woods, 1.7 kilometers west of Chorobrow. • Am 20.6.1941 rücken die Batterien näher an den Bug heran in neue Bereitstellungsräume. Die 1. Batterie liegt im Handtuchwäldchen, 1,7 km westlich Chorobrow.

There were a lot of crow's nests with young crows in the trees, and the soldiers spent time observing them. Some of them, however, ended up in the frying pan. • In den Bäumen gibt es viele Nester mit jungen Krähen, mit denen man sich die Zeit vertreiben kann. Manche enden aber auch in der Pfanne.

[Fotos via Renotiére]

[Foto via Caesar]

In the assembly area of the 3rd Battery, a lot of time was spent playing cards. From left to right: Teriete, Opitz and Neusens.
• Bei der *3./StuG.Abt. 197* vertreibt man sich die Wartezeit mit einem zünftigen Skat. V.l.n.r. Teriete, Opitz und Neusens.

Zahlmeister Peters pays soldiers of the 1st Battery on payday. • Auszahlung des Wehrsoldes bei der 1. Batterie durch Zahlmeister Peters.

[Foto via Peters]

Even the Polish-Ukrainian civilians started to get an idea that something was about to happen and observed the German build-up with mixed feelings. The "A" Gun of *Unteroffizier* Beise rolls into an assembly area. • Auch die polnisch-ukrainische Bevölkerung ahnt, dass sich etwas zusammenbraut und beobachtet den deutschen Aufmarsch mit gemischten Gefühlen. Das A-Geschütz mit Uffz. Beise rollt in die Bereitstellung.

The final assembly area before the Bug River. A tense wait for that which was about to come. On the right is the youngest officer candidate of the battalion, Löck, who would later become a *Leutnant*. • Letzte Bereitstellung am Bug. Gespanntes Warten auf das, was kommt. Rechts sitzt der jüngste Offiziersbewerber der Abteilung, der spätere Leutnant Löck.

[Fotos via Peters]

[Foto via Salamon]

22 June 1941: *Operation "Barbarossa"* has started. The 3rd Platoon of the 3rd Battery opens its attack against the bunkers of Sokal. Leutnant Salamon is in the Platoon-Leader vehicle. • 22. Juni 1941, das *Unternehmen Barbarossa* hat begonnen. Der 3. Zug der 3. Batterie eröffnet den Angriff auf die Bunker von Sokal. Im Zugführerwagen Lt. Salamon.

During the afternoon of 22 June 1941, the seemingly unending columns of *Panzergruppe von Kleist* headed for the Bug.
• In unendlichen Kolonnen rollt die *Panzergruppe Kleist* in den Nachmittagsstunden des 22. Juni 1941 auf den Bug zu.

[Foto via Peters]

The 3rd Battery in its attack on Sokal. Soldiers of *Pionier-Bataillon* 51 have mounted up and accompany the attack. • Die 3. Batterie im Angriff auf Sokal. Das Pionier Batl. 51 ist aufgesessen und gibt Begleitschutz.

In Mytnika, the 3rd Battery was able to tally a number of "kills". Several Russian BT 7's are on fire in the countryside. • Die 3. Batterie hat gleich bei Mytnika eine Reihe von Abschusserfolgen. Mehrere russische BT-7 Panzer stehen brennend im Gelände.

[Fotos via Caesar]

The first Russian tank has been knocked out. The "F" Gun received credit for the hit. • Der erste russische Panzer ist geknackt. Das F-Geschütz verbucht den Treffer.

[Foto via Salamon]

Two of the armored cars knocked out by the 1st Battery are examined. • Zwei durch die 1. Batterie 197 vernichtete Panzerspähwagen werden untersucht.

The gravesite of *Oberwachtmeister* Foth, the first soldier of the 1st Battery to be killed in action. He was hit in the head while on his assault gun. • Das Grab von Oberwachtmeister Foth, der als erster Soldat der 1. Batterie in seinem Geschütz durch Kopfschuss gefallen ist.

[Foto via Caesar]

[Foto via Lohrmann]

The Battery Officer Vehicle of *Oberleutnant* Goewe has broken down. • Mit technischem Defekt ist der Batterie-Führerwagen von Oblt. Göwe stehen geblieben.

The ammunition vehicles follow the combat elements at some distance. • Die Munitionskolonne folgt mit Abstand der Gefechtsbatterie.

[Foto via Caesar]

[Foto via Lohrmann]

Attack in the sector of the 2nd Battery. The infantry is advancing with the "D" Gun. In the 2nd Battery, many of the crewmembers continued to wear the field-gray beret of the assault artillery. • Angriff bei der 2. Batterie. Die Infanterie geht mit dem D-Geschütz vor. Bei der 2. Batterie wird von vielen Geschützbesatzungen noch immer das graue Barett der Sturmartillerie getragen.

The T 34 is encountered for the first time. *Unteroffizier* Hecker looks at the hits from it. • Erste Bekanntschaft mit einem russischen T-34. Uffz. Hecker besieht sich den Treffer.

[Foto via Hecker]

[Foto via Tams]

The trains elements examine a broken-down T 34. • Der nachfolgende Tross besichtigt einen defekten T-34.

Knocked-out light Russian tanks litter the countryside. They had little chance against the 7.5-centimeter main guns of the assault guns. • Reihenweise stehen abgeschossene russische leichte Panzer im Gelände. Gegen die 7,5 cm Kanone des Sturmgeschützes haben sie kaum Chancen.

[Foto via Busch]

Seemingly endless columns of infantry fan out into the Soviet terrain. • Unendlich lange Kolonnen der Infanterie ziehen in das russische Land hinein.

[Foto via Caesar]

[Fotos via Tams]

The 1st Battery crosses a tributary of the Styr. • Die erste Batterie beim Durchfahren von Seitenarmen des Styr.

[Fotos via Caesar]

A 52-ton Soviet KV II got stuck at Leszinow. After being examined by the soldiers, it was blown up by the infantry. • Bei Leszniow hat sich ein russicher 52 t KW II festgefahren. Nach der Begutachtung wird er von der Infanterie gesprengt.

[Foto via Salamon]

On 11 July 1941, the battalion's batteries encountered the Stalin Line. The attack was discussed with the infantry. In this photograph (from left to right): *Leutnant* Bobisch (visor cap); next to him, an infantry scout; then *Oberleutnant* Goewe, Leutnant Salamon and *Wachtmeister* Teriete. • Am 11. Juli 1941 treffen die Batterien der Abteilung auf die befestigte Stalin-Linie. Zusammen mit der Infanterie wird der Angriff festgelegt. Mit Schirmmütze Lt. Bobisch, daneben der Erkunder der Infanterie, dann Oblt. Goewe, Lt. Salamon und Wachtmeister Teriete.

The bunkers were taken under aimed fire from the assault guns. • Die Bunker werden von den Geschützen im direkten Beschuss angegangen.

[Foto via Caesar]

Bitter fighting ensued for some of the bunkers, and the infantry had to smoke them out with any and all means. • Um einige Bunker entstehen erbitterte Kämpfe und die Infanterie muss sie mit allen Mitteln ausräuchern.

Prisoners were taken and interrogated. • Gefangene werden eingebracht und verhört.

[Fotos via Caesar]

An abandoned T 34 was examined. • Ein aufgegebener T-34 wird untersucht.

The Ukrainian civilians were favorably disposed toward the German forces and looked upon them as liberators from the Soviet yoke. • Die ukrainische Bevölkerung ist den deutschen Truppen sehr wohlgesinnt und betrachtet sie als Befreier vom sowjetischen Joch.

[Fotos via Caesar]

[Foto via Caesar]

Abandoned Soviet vehicles were rendered inoperable by rolling over them. • Aufgegebene russische Fahrzeuge werden durch Überrollen unbrauchbar gemacht.

[Fotos via Caesar]

An abandoned heavy Soviet tank on the Horynka - Wicsowiec road. • Zurückgelassener schwerer russischer Panzer an der Straße Horynka- Wicsowiec.

Leutnant Bobisch examines the spoils of war. It should be noted that this T 28 was knocked out by armored forces. • Besichtigung von Kriegsbeute durch Lt. Bobisch. Dieser russische T-28 geht allerdings auf das Konto der Panzertruppe.

Leutnant Bobisch (3rd from the left) and men of his platoon in front of a knocked-out BT 7. • Leutnant Bobisch (3. v.l.) mit Männern aus seinem Zug vor einem abgeschossenen russischen BT-7 Panzer.

[Fotos via Salamon]

[Foto via Caesar]

A *Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf. G* of the *9. Pz.Div.* which was knocked out by friendly fire (antitank guns). • Von der eigenen Pak abgeschossener Pz.Kpfw.III Ausf. G der *9. Pz.Div.*

Knocked-out and captured Soviet BT 7's are examined. • Abgeschossene und erbeutete russische BT-7 Panzer werden besichtigt.

[Foto via Peters]

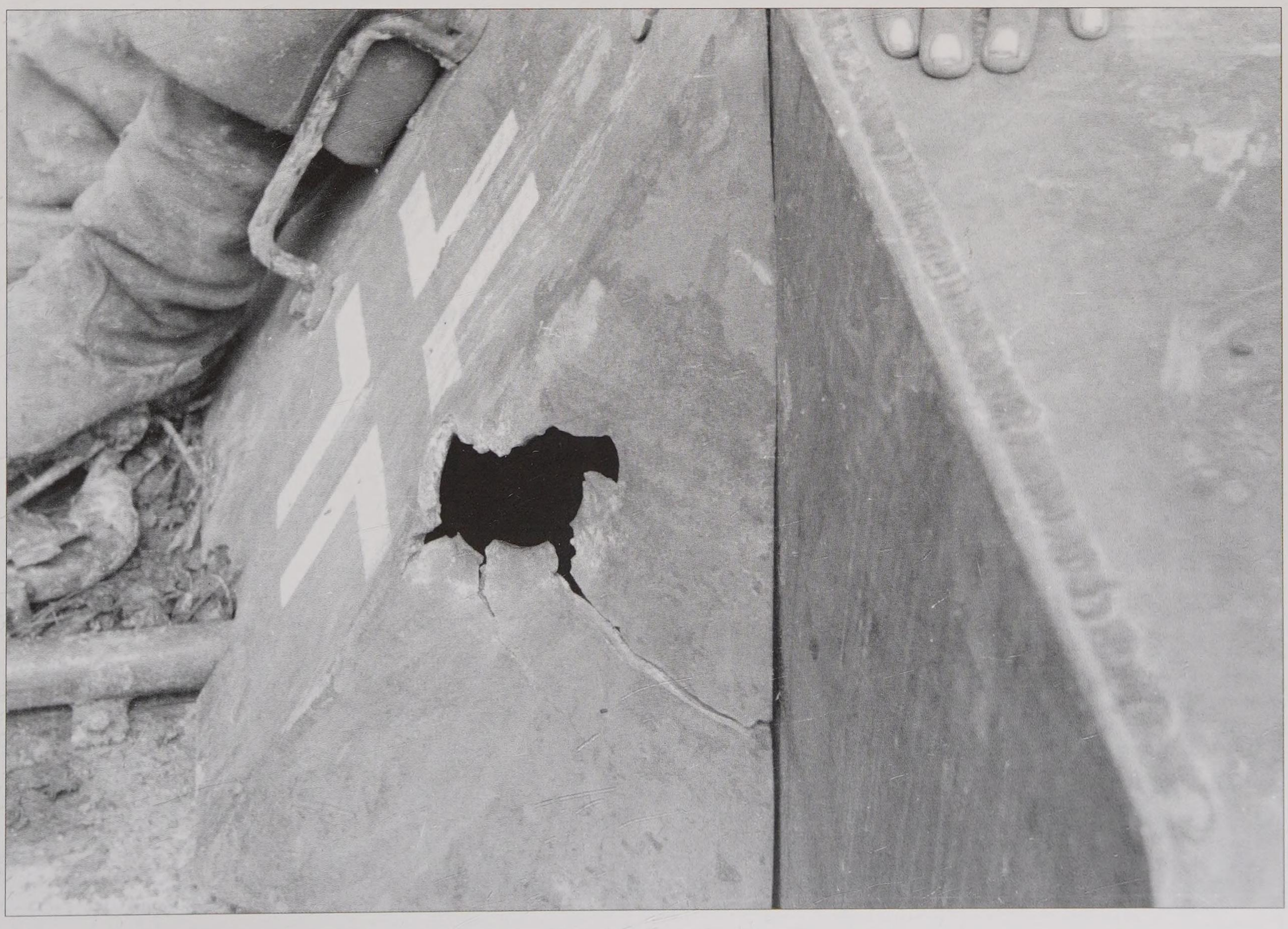
Fourteen "kills" can be identified on the gun mantlet of this assault gun from the 1st Battery. The horseshoe on the front slope of the superstructure seems to have brought this crew good luck up to this point. • Auf der Kanonenpanzerung dieses Geschützes der *1./StuG.Abt. 197* sind bereits 14 Abschussmarkierungen ersichtlich. Das auf der Bugpanzerung angebrachte Hufeisen hat der Besatzung bisher Glück gebracht.

The "C" Gun of the 1st Battery during a stop for resupply along the route of advance. A few members of the fuel section use the opportunity to take a photo along with the crew. • Das C-Geschütz der 1. Batterie beim Versorgungshalt auf der Rollbahn. Neben der Besatzung nutzen auch einige Angehörige der Spritstaffel die Gelegenheit zu einem Erinnerungsfoto.

[Foto via Tams]

[Foto via Caesar]

The "F" Gun of the 3rd Battery received its first hit at Welkie. The crew was happy with the outcome of the engagement. • Das F-Geschütz der 3. Batterie erhält bei Welkie seinen ersten Treffer. Die Besatzung freut sich über den glücklichen Ausgang des Panzerduells.



[Fotos via Caesar]

The former Soviet border was crossed at Lenowce on 6 July 1941. The advance continued in the direction of Kiev. The 3rd Battery had to take pains when crossing a less-than-stable bridge. • Die alte russische Grenze wird am 6. Juli 1941 bei Lenowce überschritten. Es geht vorwärts in Richtung Kiew. Mühsam muss die 3. Batterie eine morsche Brücke überwinden.

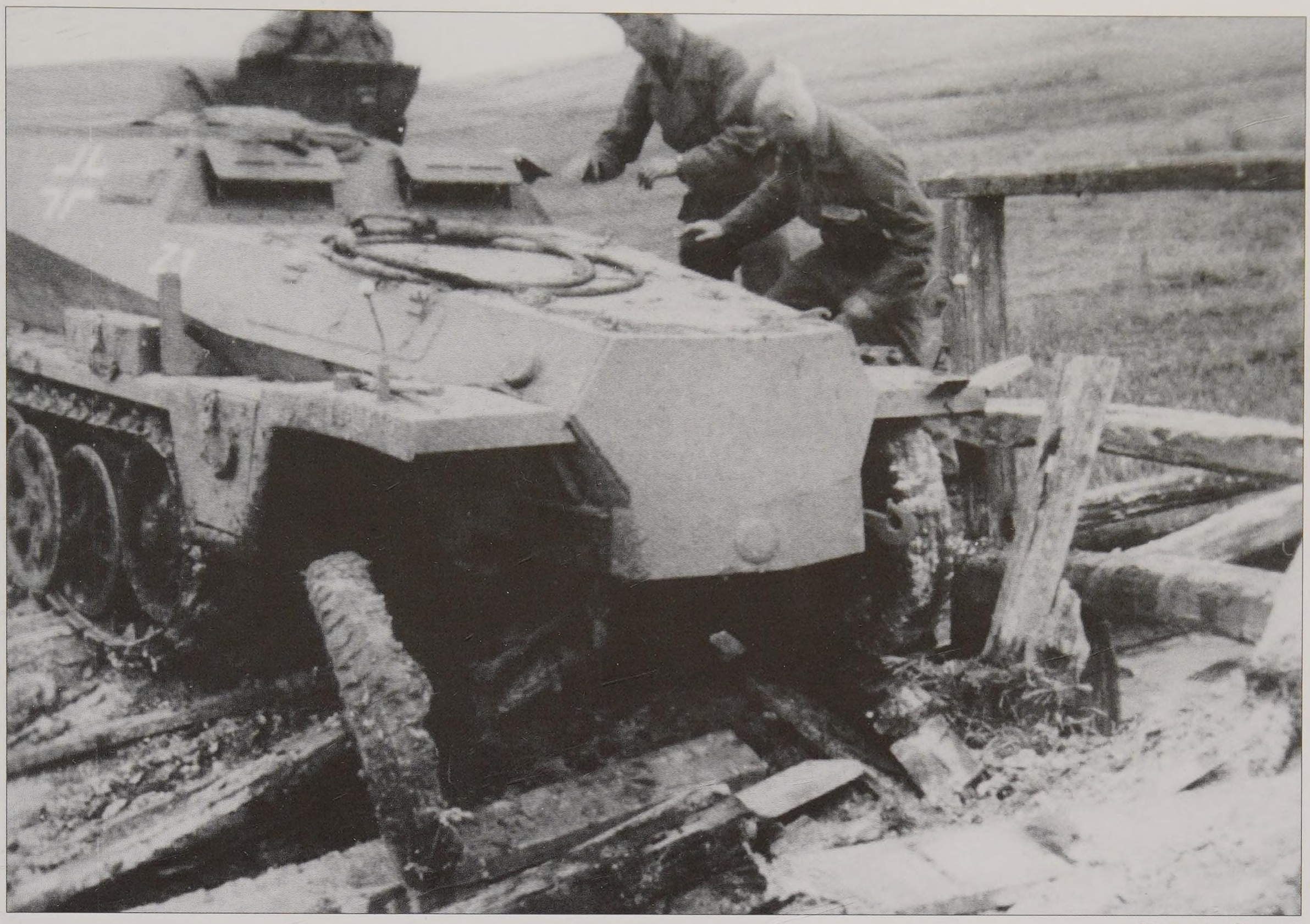
[Foto via Caesar]

The weight of the assault guns is too much for the bridge and the beams break. • Das Gewicht der Sturmgeschütze ist für die Brücke zu schwer und die Balken brechen.

[Fotos via Caesar]

The guns that followed had to bypass the bridge, so that the wheeled vehicles that followed could use it.

• Die nachfolgenden Geschütze müssen die Brücke umfahren, um sie für die nachfolgenden Räderfahrzeuge zu erhalten.



[Foto via Caesar]

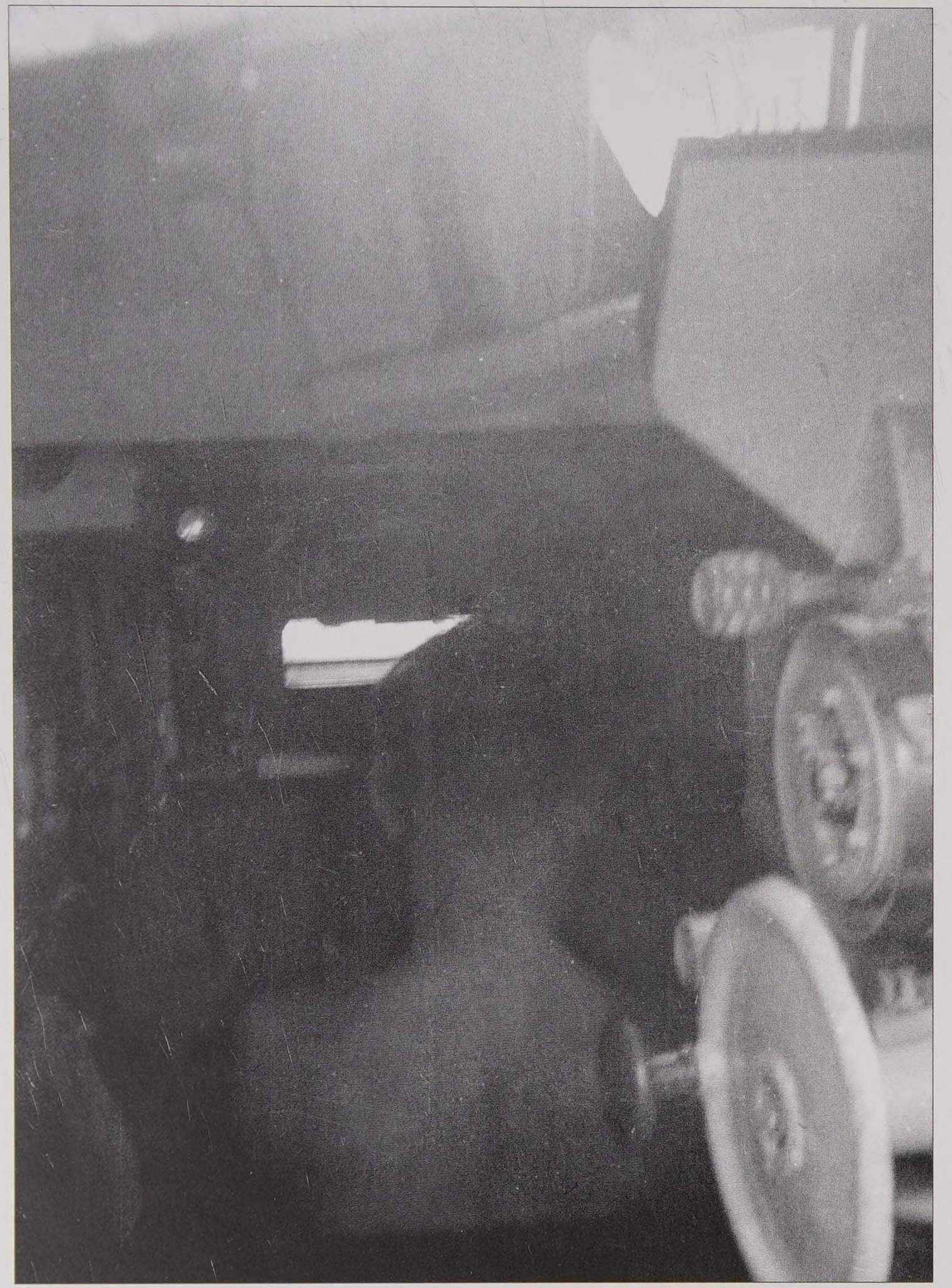
The "Z3" Platoon-Leader Vehicle struggles to cross what remains of the bridge. • Der Zugführerwagen Z3 quält sich über den verbliebenen Rest der Brücke.

The "A" Gun of the 1st Battery. After heavy rainfalls, everything is covered in mud. • Das A-Geschütz der 1. Batterie. Nach heftigen Regenfällen ist alles verschlammt.

[Foto via Peters]

[Fotos via Caesar]

A rest break during the advance. • Rast auf dem Vormarsch. Die Besatzung hält Mittagsschlaf.



[Fotos via Caesar]

The driver of the "F" Gun. Despite the fact that the hatches were open, very little fresh air filtered into the fighting compartment, and the temperature inside was practically unbearable. • Der Fahrer des F-Geschützes. Trotz der geöffneten Dachluken dringt nur wenig Frischluft in den Kampfraum und die Temperatur in den Geschützen ist fast unerträglich.

Taking it easy on the roof of the superstructure. • Man hat es sich auf dem Geschützdach bequem gemacht.

[Foto via Caesar]

Unteroffizier Willi Opitz conscientiously takes notes in his pocket calendar. • Uffz. Willi Opitz trägt gewissenhaft Notizen in seinen Taschenkalender ein.

Members of the 1st Battery in the summer of 1941. • Angehörige der 1. Batterie im Sommer 1941.

[Foto via Schlabs]

[Foto via Peters]

An assembly area prior to the assault on the Kanew bridgehead. • Bereitstellung zum Sturm auf den Brückenkopf bei Kanew.

The "F" Gun of the 3rd Battery has gotten itself stuck in a Soviet tank ditch. • Das F-Geschütz der 3. Batterie hat sich in einem russischen Panzergraben festgefahren. [Foto via Caesar]

An overrun Soviet position at Kanew in August 1941. • Überrollte russische Stellung bei Kanew im August 1941.

Destroyed and captured spoils of war in the Kanew Bridgehead. • Zerstörtes und erbeutetes Kriegsgerät im Brückenkopf Kanew.

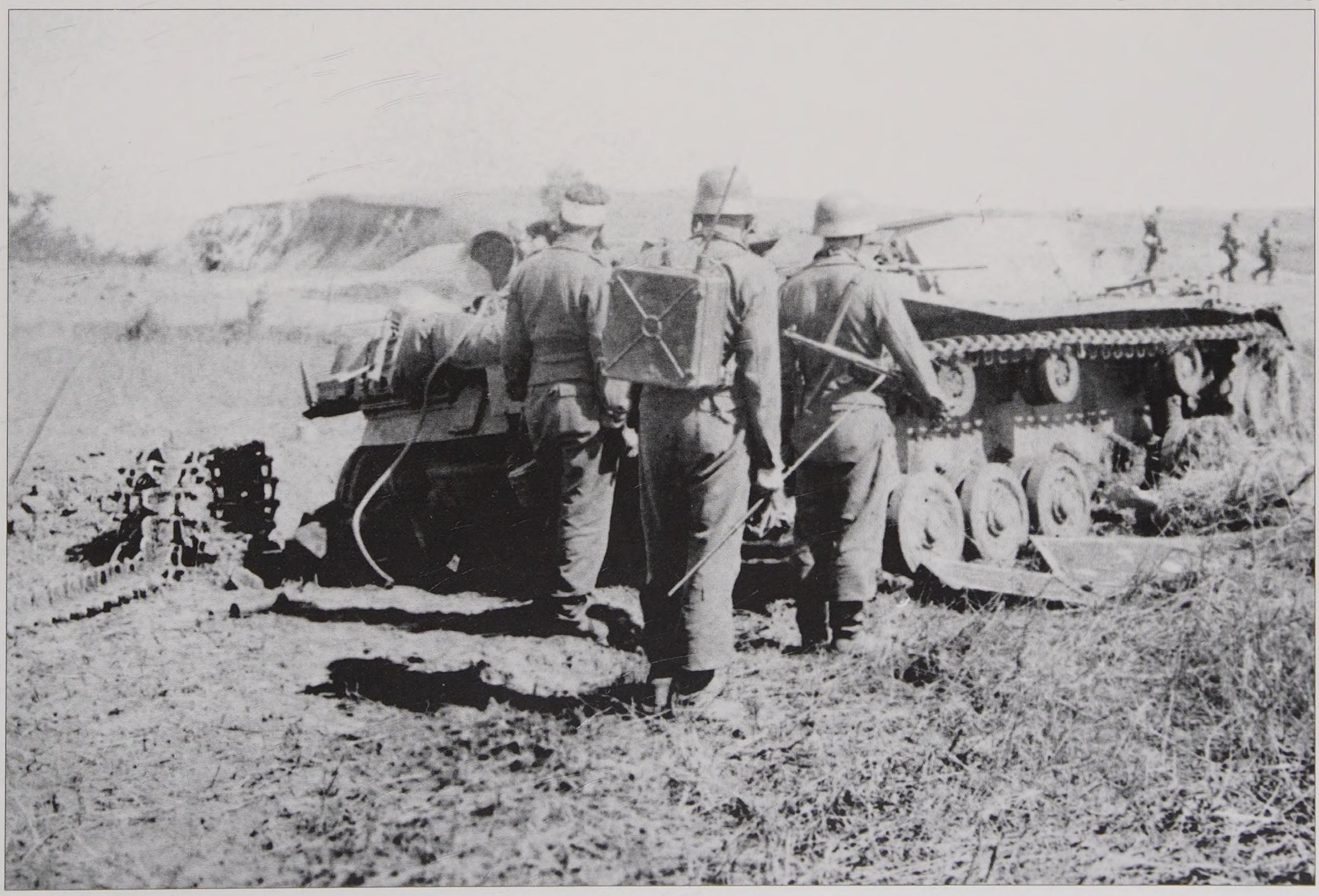
[Fotos via Salamon]

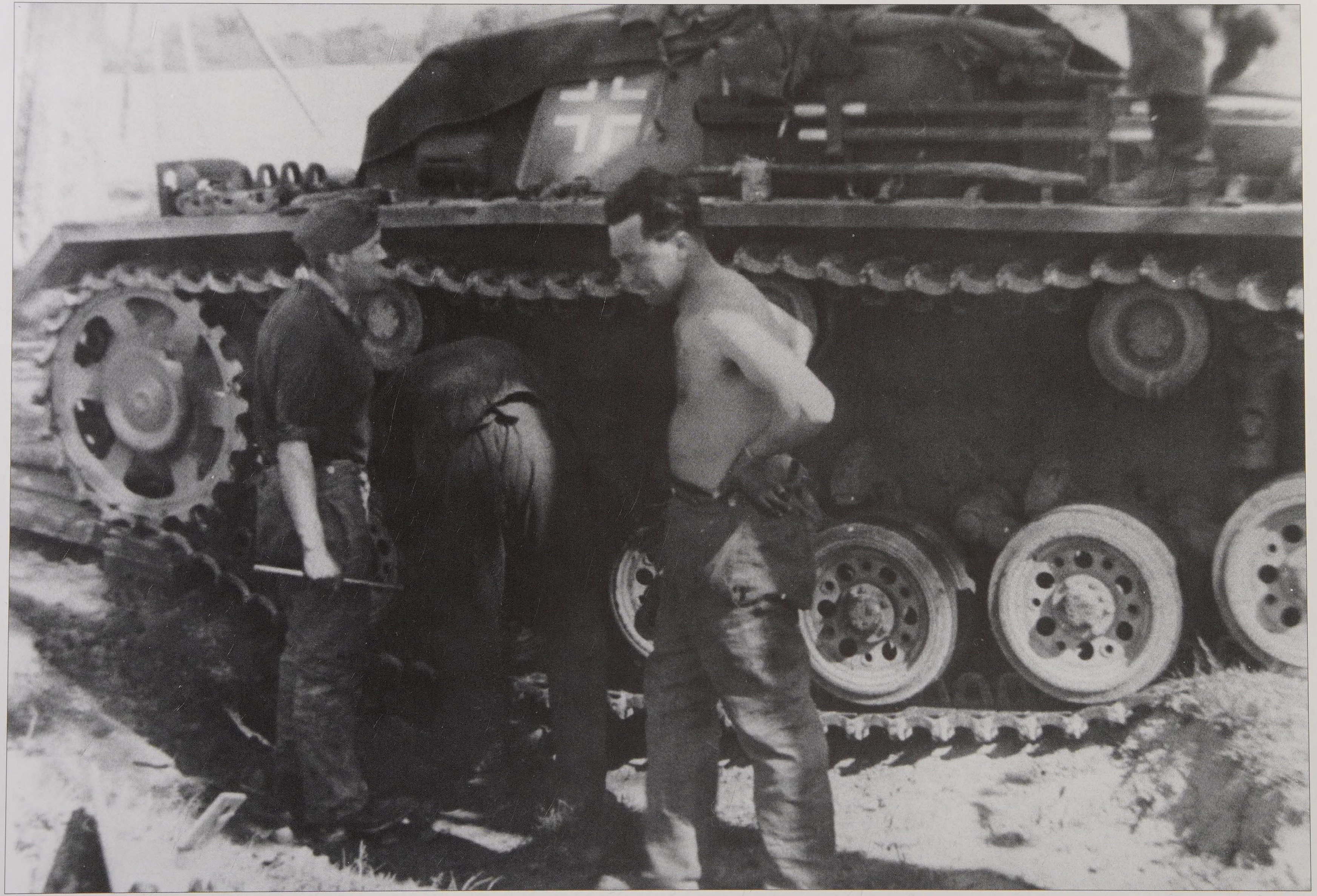
[Foto via Peters]

The assault gun of the Battery Commander of the 1st Battery was disabled by mines. • Das durch Minen ausgefallene Chef-Geschütz der 1. Batterie.

An assault gun of the 3rd Battery in an enemy minefield with ripped apart track and damaged roadwheels. • Ein Geschütz der 3. Batterie mit zerrissener Kette und defekten Laufrollen im feindlichen Minenfeld.

[Foto via Lohrmann]





[Foto via Lohrmann]

A crew of the 2nd Battery and members of the maintenance section replace damaged roadwheels. • Eine Besatzung der 2. Batterie und Angehörige des I-Trupp bei der Reparatur von

The final resting place for the soldiers killed in the fighting to take the Kanew Bridgehead. • Letzte Ruhestätte der bei den Kämpfen um den Brückenkopf Kanew gefallenen Soldaten.

A *Fieseler Storch* lands next to the route of advance and brings new orders. • Ein Fieseler Storch landet neben der Rollbahn und überbringt neue Befehle.

[Fotos via Caesar]

Wachtmeister Caesar during the preparations for the legendary chicken soup! • Wachtmeister Caesar bei der Zubereitung der legendären Hühnersuppe!

Gefreiter Bönike in the ammunition carrier of the 3rd Platoon. • Gefreiter Bönike im Muni-Transporter des 3. Zuges.

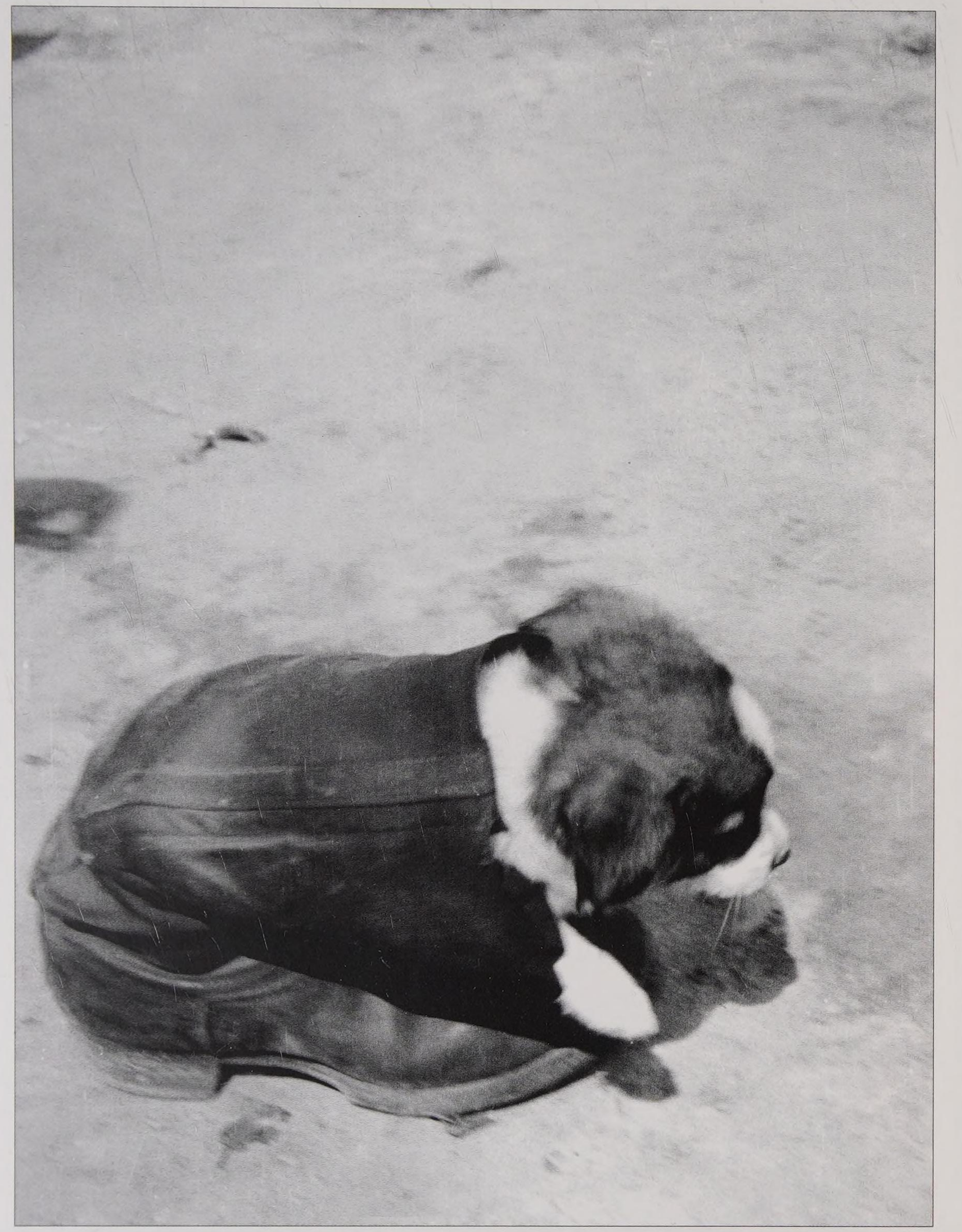
[Fotos via Caesar]

[Fotos via Caesar]

No idle hands in the area of the maintenance facility! Many of the assault guns of the battalion had become disabled due to damage to their running gear. • Hochbetrieb auf dem Werkstattgelände. Viele Geschütze der Abteilung sind mit Laufwerkschäden ausgefallen.

[Fotos via Caesar]

The engine cover on the "F" Gun of the 3rd Battery is being raised. • Am F-Geschütz der *3./StuG. Abt.197* wird die Motorabdeckung abgehoben.



[Fotos via Caesar]

The battery's dog apparently feels right at home in this boot! • Der Batterie-Hund fühlt sich im Knobelbecher offensichtlich wohl.

A new engine is installed. The crew and the maintenance personnel work hand-in-hand. • Einsetzen eines neuen Motors. Besatzung und I-Trupp arbeiten Hand in Hand.

[Fotos via Caesar]

While the assault gun is at the maintenance facilities, personal hygiene can also be attended to. *Unteroffizier* Pippig is seen shaving. • Während das Geschütz in der Instandsetzung ist, kann endlich Körperpflege betrieben werden. Uffz. Pippig beim Rasieren.

Wilhelm Opitz quickly writes a few letters home. • Wilhelm Opitz schreibt eifrig Briefe nach Hause.

[Foto via Schlabs]

The battalion approached the Dnjepr River quickly and without too much resistance. • Rasch und ohne viel Feindwiderstand nähert sich die Abteilung dem Dnjepr

An assault gun of the 1st Battery covered in dust. • Mit Staub bedecktes Geschütz der 1. Batterie.

Foto via Peters]

[Foto via Beck]

After an artillery barrage, this assault gun of the 3rd Battery had to be shoveled out. • Nach einem Artillerieüberfall muss dieses Geschütz der *3./StuG.Abt. 197* erst wieder freigeschaufelt werden.

The assault guns were rearmed prior to the start of the assault on the Dnjepr. • Die Geschütze werden nochmals aufmunitioniert, bevor der Sturm auf den Dnjepr beginnt.

[Foto via Kobrow]

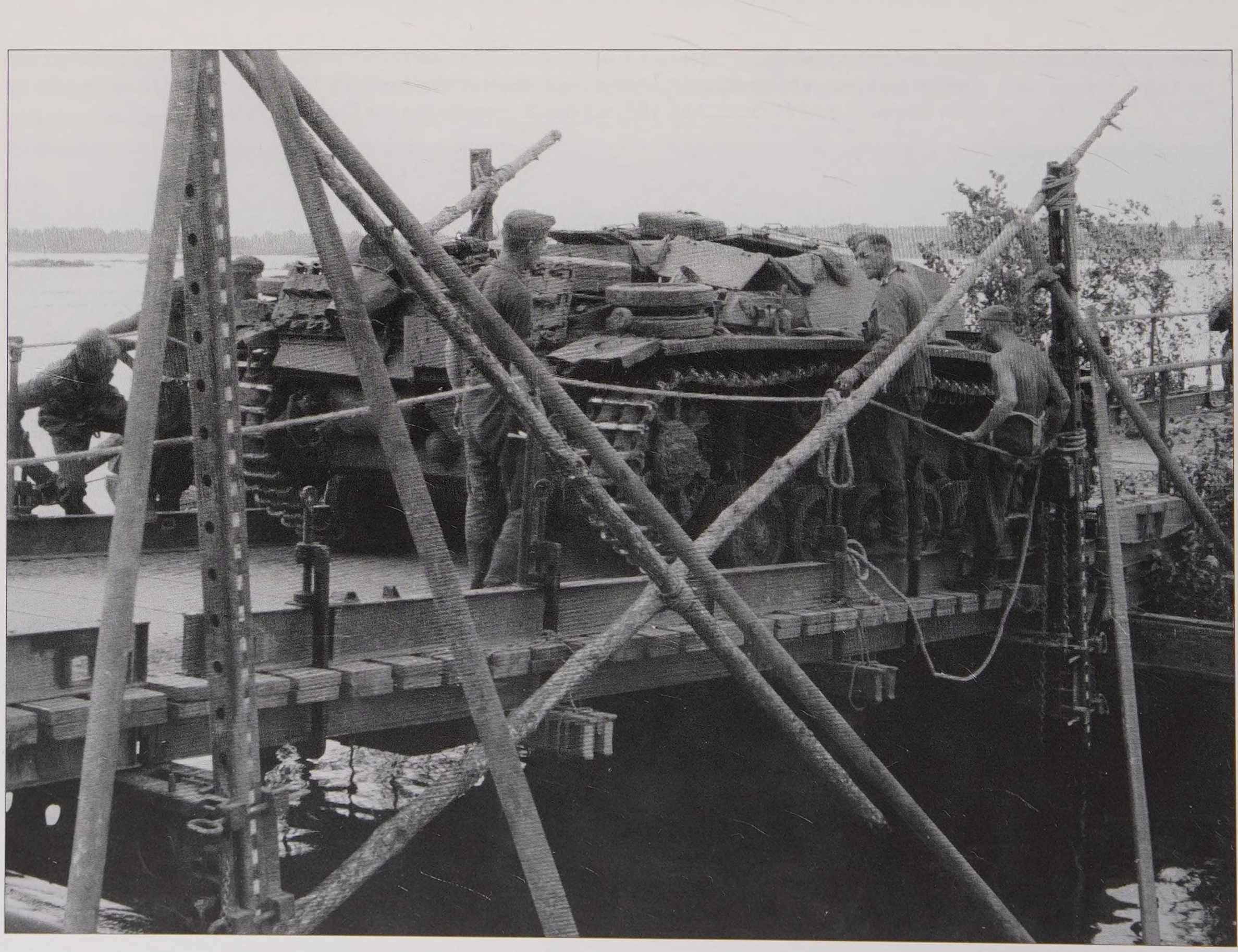
[Foto via Salamon]

Waiting for the ferry to cross the Dnjepr. • Warten auf die Fähre zum Übersetzen am Dnjepr.

The *Kannonenadler* with a white background (1st Battery) on the front slope of the battery's "C" Gun. • Der *Kanonenadler* im weißen Wappenschild (1./StuG.Abt. 197) auf der Bugpanzerung des C-Geschützes. [Foto via Renotiére]

[Fotos via Caesar]

On 2 September 1941, the battalion crossed the Dnjepr at Pawlysch by means of ferries. • Am 2. September 1941 setzt die Abteilung mittels Fähren bei Pawlysch über den Dnjepr.



[Fotos via Tams and Peters]

The crossing went without a hitch and without appreciable enemy resistance. • Ohne nennenswerten Feindwiderstand vollzieht sich das Übersetzen reibungslos.

[Foto via Riecker]

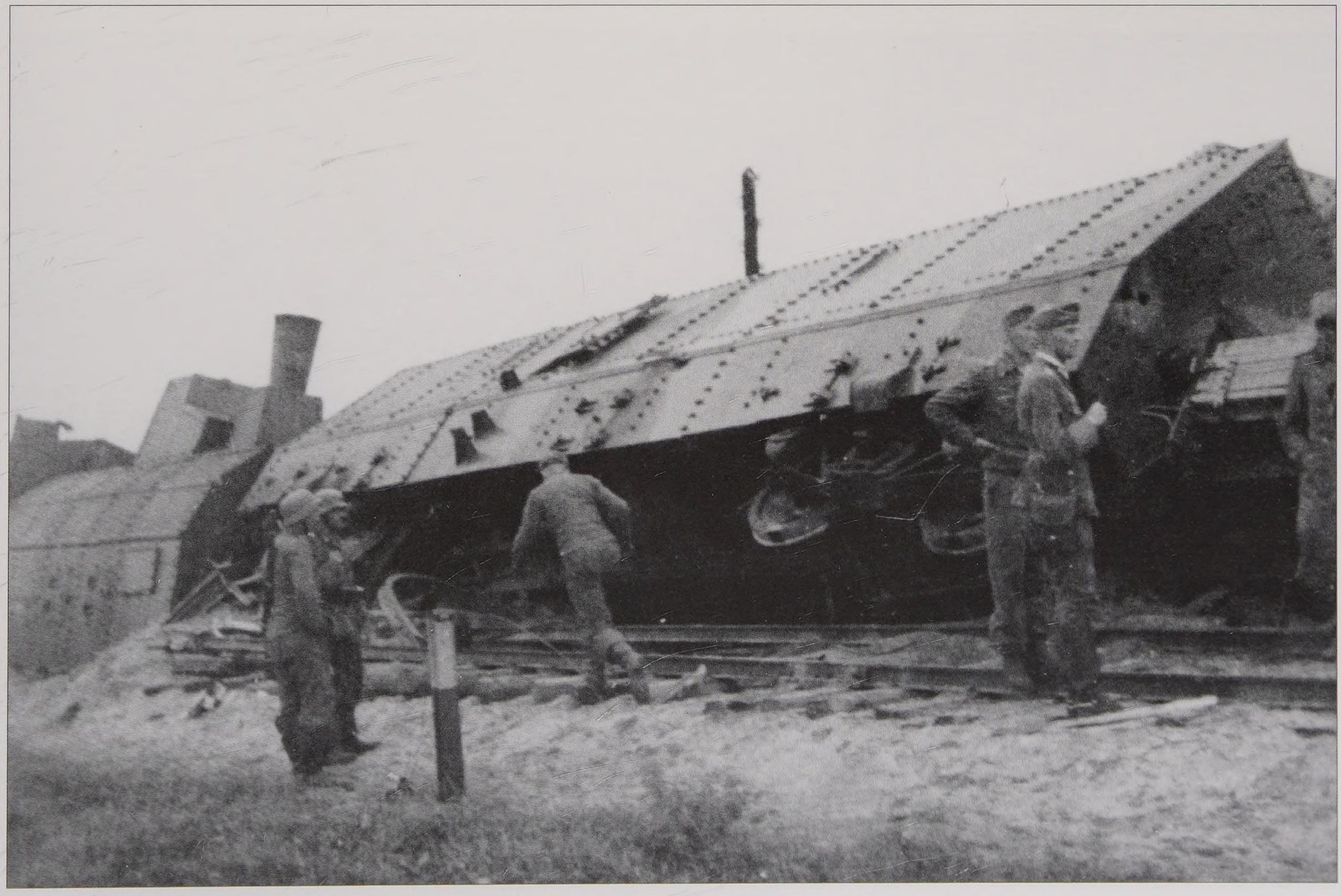
A base camp used for screening the attack at Lawrikowa on 4 September 1941. The left-hand mudguard has been torn off by a mortar round. • Bereitstellung zur Sicherung des Angriffs bei Lawrikowa am 4. September 1941. Durch Granatwerfertreffer ist die linke Kettenabdeckung abgerissen.

The *Luftwaffe* shot down a Soviet bomber, which impacted with a powerful explosion. • Die deutsche Luftwaffe hat einen russischen Bomber abgeschossen, der in einer gewaltigen Detonation aufschlägt.

[Foto via Renotiére]

[Fotos via Salamon]

The intentions of this Soviet armored train were "derailed" by two assault guns of the 3rd Battery on 4 September 1941. • Von zwei Geschützen der 3. Batterie wird dieser russische Panzerzug am 4. September 1941 zur Strecke gebracht.



[Fotos via Salamon]

The decisive hits were scored by the "E" Gun of *Unteroffizier* Neusens and the "F" Gun of Wacht*meister* Teriete. • Die entscheidenden Treffer erzielt das E-Geschütz unter Führung von Uffz. Neusens und das F-Geschütz von Wachtmeister Teriete.

An intense engagement with Soviet tanks on 18 September 1941, as seen through the optics of the gunner. One T 34 burns, while a second tank has already been identified. • Schweres Gefecht mit russischen Panzern am 18. September 1941 durch die Optik des Richt-Uffz. gesehen. Ein T-34 brennt, während der zweite gegnerische Panzer bereits ausgemacht ist.

The gun commander intensely observes the effect of the hit through his scissors telescope. • Der Geschützführer beobachtet gespannt am Scherenfernrohr die Trefferwirkung.

[Fotos via Caesar]

[Foto via Caesar]

Another T 34 is in the sights. The crosshairs are located precisely between the turret and the hull. • Ein weiterer T-34 ist anvisiert. Das Zieldreieck deutet genau zwischen Panzerwanne und Turmdrehkranz.

The effectiveness of the hits is observed after the engagement. *Leutnant* Bobisch is wearing the visor cap. • Nach der Panzerschlacht wird die Trefferwirkung begutachtet. Mit Schirmmütze Lt. Bobisch. [Foto via Salamon]

[Fotos via Renotiére]

The 3rd Battery captured two completely intact T 34's outside of Poltava. They were incorporated into the battalion. • Vor Poltawa erbeutet die 3. Batterie zwei völlig intakte russische T-34, die der Abteilung einverleibt werden.

[Foto via Weniger]

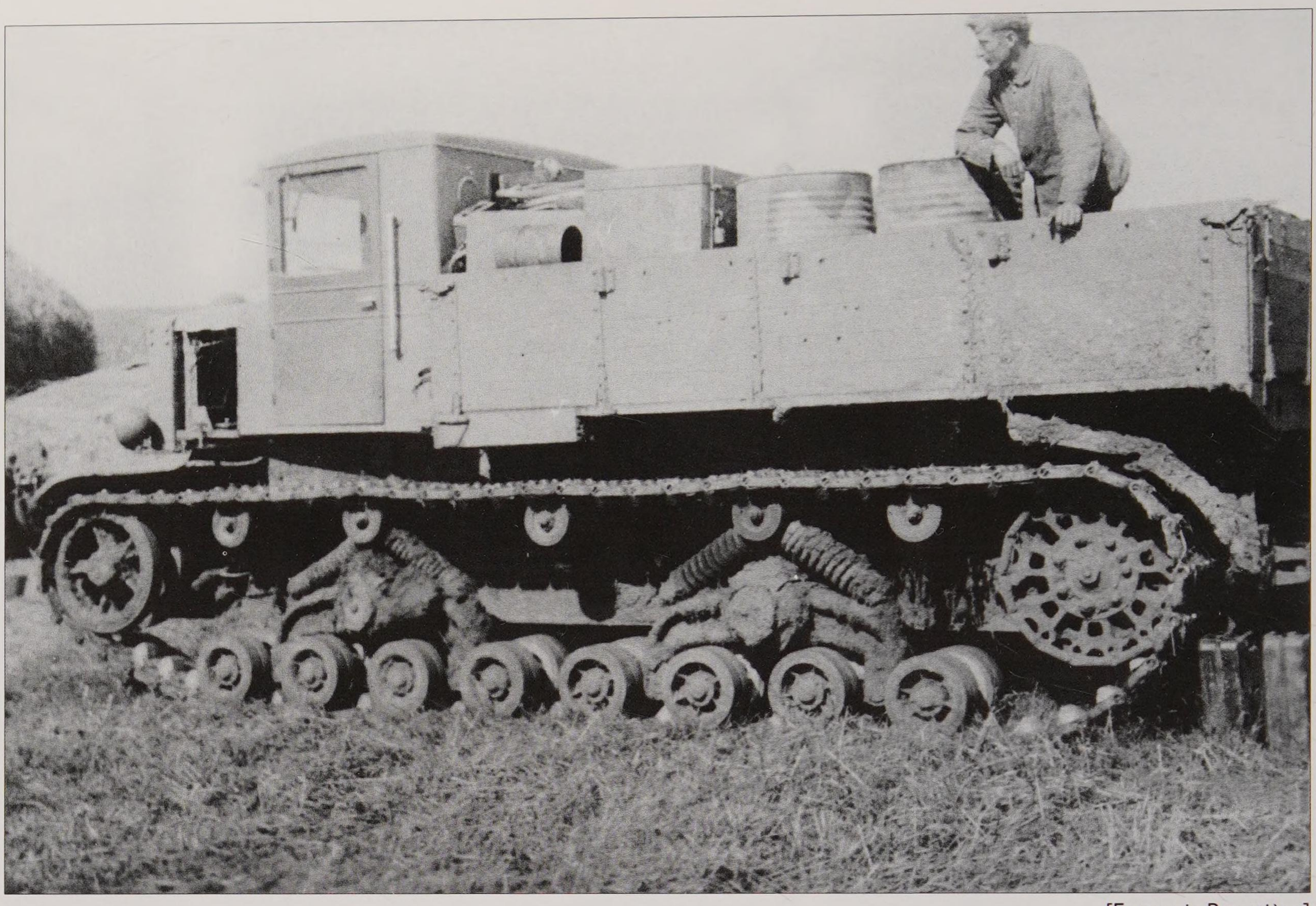
The vehicles were inspected thoroughly in the maintenance facility and set up for use by the Germans. • In der Werkstatt werden die Fahrzeuge genauestens untersucht und zur eigenen Verwendung hergerichtet.

The tanks were used within the 3rd Battery, after an oversized *Balkenkreuz* had been applied. • Mit großen Balkenkreuzen versehen kommen die Panzer in der 3./197 zum Einsatz.

[Foto via Sabrowsky]

[Foto via Renotière]

The turret is removed by the maintenance section on a captured T-34 by means of a crane. Behind it is the second T-34 of the 3./StuG.Abt. 197. Poltava, October 1941.



[Fotos via Renotière]

In order to keep supplies coming to the combat vehicles, captured Soviet vehicles were also employed, such as this Komintern 604r prime mover. • Um die Versorgung der Gefechtsfahrzeuge aufrechterhalten zu können, kommen auch russische Beutefahrzeuge zum Einsatz, wie etwa dieser russische Schlepper vom Typ Komintern (Kom 604r).

[Foto via Kobrow]

The weather turned worse and worse. Rain and snow as early as October hindered the ability to advance. One of the two captured T 34's can be seen on the right. They were usually used to recover and tow vehicles and guns. • Das Wetter wird immer schlechter. Regen und Schnee behindern bereits Mitte Oktober das weitere Vorwärtskommen. Rechts im Bild ist einer der beiden Beute T-34 zu sehen, die meist zum Abschleppen und Bergen von Fahrzeugen und Geschützen benutzt werden.

In order to protect the crew compartment from rain water coming in, the crews have placed chemical protective capes over the upper superstructure and the main gun. • Um den Innenraum vor eindringendem Regenwasser zu schützen, haben die Besatzungen die Schutzplanen über das Aufbaudach und die Kanone gezogen.

[Foto via Caesar]

[Fotos via Caesar]

The suburbs of Kharkow have been reached. The gun commander observes the cityscape with his scissors telescope in order to find possible targets. • Die Vororte von Charkow sind erreicht. Der Geschützführer beobachtet das Stadtbild mit dem Scherenfernrohr und sucht nach möglichen Zielen.

The attack on the city has begun. The platoon leader's vehicle is seen rolling forward. • Der Angriff auf die Stadt beginnt. Das Zugführergeschütz rollt nach vorne.

[Fotos via Caesar]

The access roads to the city are cleared of the enemy along with combat engineers. • Gemeinsam mit Pionieren werden die Zugangsstraßen zur Stadt freigekämpft.

The attack has been photographed from the open hatch of the "C" Gun of the *3./StuG.Abt. 197*. The steel helmet of the gun commander can be seen in the foreground; in the rear, an 8.8-centimeter Flak is being brought forward, while a battery command vehicle has been parked under cover. Kharkov, 24 October 1941. • Der Angriff festgehalten aus der offenen Geschützluke des C-Geschützes der *3./StuG.Abt. 197*. Im Vordergrund ist der Stahlhelm des Geschützführers zu sehen, während im Hintergrund eine 8,8 cm Flak nachgezogen wird und ein Batterie-führerwagen in Deckung abgestellt ist. Charkow, 24. Oktober 1941.

[Fotos via Caesar]

A view through the optics of the gunner during the fighting. In the foreground, a 3.7-centimeter antitank gun has been emplaced. • Blick durch die Optik des Richt.-Uffz. während der Kämpfe.

[Fotos via Salamon]

On 25 October 1941, Kharkov, the third-largest city in the Soviet Union, was firmly in German hands. A Fieseler *Storch* light liaison aircraft has landed on "Red Square" in the middle of the city. • Am 25. Oktober 1941 ist Charkow, die drittgrößte Stadt der Sowjetunion, fest in deutscher Hand. Auf dem Roten Platz im Stadtzentrum ist ein Fieseler *Storch* gelandet.

The new commander of the battalion, along with some of his officers. The orders to move the battalion to the Crimea have been received and everyone was looking forward to the better climate in the south. From left to right: Gärtner, Steinkoff, Steinwachs, Dr. Bauermeister and Salamon. • Der neue Kommandeur der Abteilung Hauptmann Steinwachs mit einigen seiner Offiziere. Der Befehl zur Verlegung der Abteilung auf die Krim ist eingegangen und man freut sich auf das bessere Klima im Süden. V.l.n.r.: Gärtner, Steinkoff, Steinwachs, Dr. Bauermeister, Salamon.

[Foto via Tams]

The battalion headed out for the Crimea on 4 November 1941. The routes were in horrific condition and many of the vehicles became disabled or had to be towed. • Am 4. November 1941 bricht die Abteilung auf in Richtung Krim. Die Wege sind in katastrophalem Zustand und viele Fahrzeuge fallen aus oder müssen geschleppt werden.

It was only with great difficulty that fuel and ammunition could be brought forward during the march. • Sprit und Munition können auf dem Marsch nur äußerst mühsam zugeführt werden.

[Foto via Peters]

During this period, the batteries had to be self-reliant in the procurement of rations.
• Während dieser Zeit sind die Batterien auf Selbstverpflegung angewiesen.

[Fotos via Caesar]

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• Während dieser Zeit sind die Batterien auf Selbstverpflegung angewiesen.

[Foto via Caesar]

The batteries covered between 50 and 70 kilometers each day. Unforseen obstacles, such as weak bridges, often made progress difficult, however. • Die Marschleistungen der Batterien liegen bei 50 bis 70 km pro Tag. Doch oftmals erschweren unvorhergesehene Hindernisse, wie z.B. zu schwache Brücken, das Vorwärtskommen.

Saporoshje on the Dnjepr is reached, and the dam that had been blown up by the Soviets was bypassed. • Saporoshje am Dnjepr ist erreicht und der von den Sowjets gesprengte Staudamm wird passiert.

[Foto via Salamon]

[Foto via Caesar]

A march pause in the old part of Saporoshje on 10 November 1941. • Marschhalt in Alt-Saporoshje am 10. November 1941.

The vehicles are topped off in Jantschekrak. The Soviet farmer women are beside themselves that they are also allowed to take some of the fuel. • Betankung der Fahrzeuge in Jantschekrak. Die russischen Bäuerinen sind überglücklich, dass sie sich auch etwas Benzin abfüllen dürfen.

[Foto via Peters]

[Foto via Caesar]

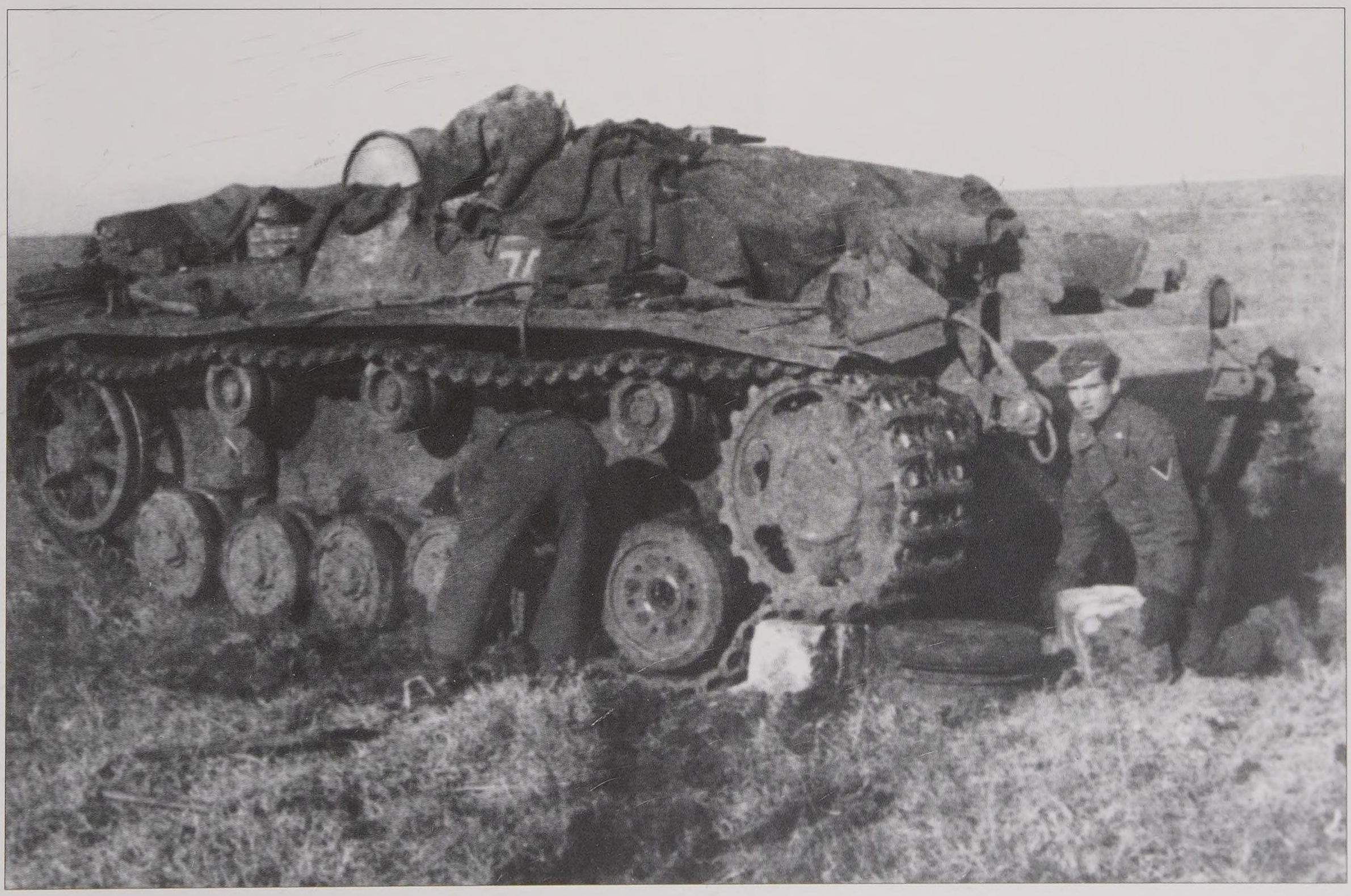
A towing party on the steppes, moving in the direction of Melitopol. The assault guns proved to be quite reliable on the long marches. • Im Schleppzug geht es durch die Steppe in Richtung Melitopol. Die Sturmgeschütze erweisen sich auf den langen Marschstrecken als sehr zuverlässig.

[Foto via Caesar]

There were still some 350 kilometers to cover before reaching Simferopol, the capital of the Crimea. The steppes seemed to never end. • Immer noch fast 350 km bis Simferopol der Hauptstadt der Krim. Die nogaische Steppe wirkt unendlich.

Temperatures down to -20 degrees (-4 degrees Fahrenheit) took their toll on the vehicles: Engine blocks cracked, brake drums froze. The maintenance sections had their hands full. • Die Kälte von -20°C fordert nun ihren Tribut an den Fahrzeugen. Gerissene Motorblöcke, eingefrorene Bremstrommeln usw. Der I-Trupp hat alle Hände voll zu tun.

[Foto via Peters]



[Foto via Caesar]

The narrows at Perekop have been reached. The battalion was ordered to Ukrainka (via Dshankoj), a suburb of Simferopol. • Die Landenge von Perekop ist erreicht. Die Abteilung wird über Dshankoj nach Ukrainka, einem Vorort von Ssimferopol beordert.

Übersichtskarte Krim

Asowsches Meer

Schwarzes Meer

SIWASCH

FAULES MEER

SSIMFEROPOL

SSEWASTOPOL

JEWPATORIJA

FEODOSSIJA

JALTA

KERTSCH

Dshankoj Ssrednij

Landzunge

Istanbul - Sewastopol 299 Meilen

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 km

[Fotos via Peters und Beck]

The billets of the 1./StuG.Abt. 197 at Ukrainka. The billets were wonderful when compared to the average ones on the Soviet Union. • Die Quartiere der 1. Batterie in Ukrainka. Für russische Verhältnisse sind die Unterkünfte hervorragend.

[Fotos via Cantz]

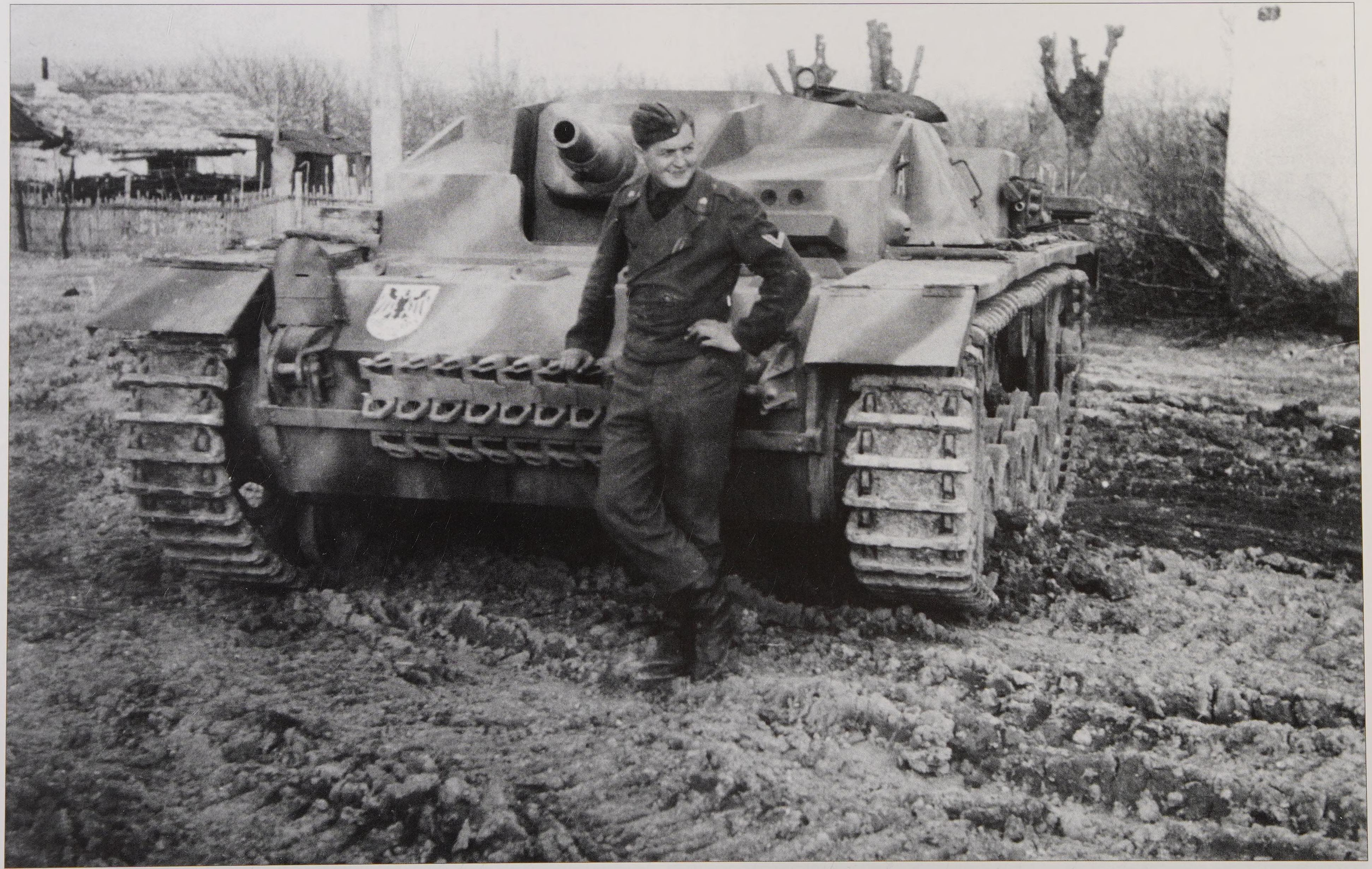
In spite of the normally relatively mild winter conditions on the Crimean Peninsula, there was an unusually severe winter there as well, which forced the crews to cover their vehicles with a coat of white for the upcoming attack on Sevastopol. • Trotz des normalerweise milden Klimas der Krim, kommt es auch hier zu einem ungewöhnlich heftigen Wintereinbruch, der die Besatzungen zwingt, die Geschütze für den bevorstehenden Angriff auf Sewastopol mit weißer Tarnfarbe zu versehen.

[Foto via Henning]

The German attack on the fortress of Sevastopol started on 17 December 1941. Because the Soviet fortress had not been attrited yet, all of the efforts to take it proved futile. Within a few hours, all of the 1./StuG.Abt. 197 had been shot up. • Am 17. Dezember 1941 beginnt der deutsche Angriff auf die Festung Sewastopol. Da die russische Verteidigung noch nicht geschwächt ist, scheitern alle Versuche die Festung zu erobern. Innerhalb weniger Stunden ist die gesamte 1. Batterie völlig zusammengeschossen.

[Fotos via Caesar]

Personnel of the *3./StuG.Abt. 197* await Christmas. Christmas Eve on the Crimean Peninsula. • Angehöriger der *3./StuG.Abt. 197* in Erwartung des Weihnachtsfestes. Heiligabend 1941 auf der Krim.



[Foto via Schlabs]

At the end of February 1942, the 1./StuG.Abt. 197 received six new guns. These have already had a coat of paint applied for use in North Africa. • Ende Februar 1942 erhält die 1. Batterie sechs neue Sturmgeschütze zugeführt, diese sind bereits mit dem Afrika-Tarnansrich versehen.

[Foto via Tams]

In front of the billets at Ukrainka. For the transition period, the guns had "wave" camouflage applied. • Vor der Unterkunft in Ukrainka. Die Geschütze werden für die Übergangszeit mit einem wellenförmigen Tarnanstrich versehen.

On 1 March 1942, the *1./StuG.Abt.197* departed for the front at Kerch. • Am 1. März 1942 erfolgt der Abmarsch der 1. Batterie an die Kertsch-Front.

[Foto via Schlabs]

[Foto via Riecker]

Gefreiter Riecker of the *1./StuG.Abt. 197* in the Z3 platoon-leader vehicle. It was cristened with the name *Klärchen* ("Little Clara"). • Gefr. Riecker (*1./StuG.Abt. 197*) im Zugführerwagen Z3, der auf den Namen Klärchen getauft worden ist.

[Foto via Cantz]

Members of the 1./StuG.Abt. 197 in front of the Z3 platoon-leader vehicle at Seit-Assan. • Angehörige der 1. Batterie vor dem Zugführerwagen Z3 bei Seit-Assan.

[Foto via Schlabs]

A collective farm two kilometers east of Islam-Terek was set up as the permanent billets for the 1./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197, since it proved to be quite cozy. • Ein Kolchos 2 km ostwärts Islam-Terek wird als ständige Unterkunft für die 1. Batterie hergerichtet, da er sich als sehr wohnlich erweist.

The guns of the *1./StuG.Abt. 197* in Seit-Assan. In some caes, billets had to be drawn in animal stalls and destoyed buildings. • Die Geschütze der *1./StuG.Abt. 197* in Seit-Assan. Hier muss teilweise in Ställen und zerstörten Häusern Quartier bezogen werden.

[Foto via Appel]

A major engagement was fought on 13 March 1942 just in front of the Islam - Terek - Wladislawowka rail line. Oberfeldwebel Schrödel knocked out eight Soviet armored vehicles with his "E" Gun. • Großkampftag am 13. März 1942 kurz vor der Bahnlinie Islam-Terek - Wladislawowka. Owm. Schrödel vernichtet mit dem E-Geschütz 8 russische Panzer.

The ground, which had become soft as a result of the thaw, hindered the movements of the command & control vehicles and the supply vehicles when they moved cross-country. Here: The Z1 has to be dug out with a lot of time and effort. • Der durch das Tauwetter aufgeweichte Boden behindert die Bewegungen der Führungs- und Versorgungsfahrzeuge im Gelände. Hier muss der Z1 mühsam ausgegraben werden. [Fotos via Schleicher]

Several intense attacks mounted by the Soviets were turned back, and Leutnant Spielmann was mentioned by name in the Wehrmacht Daily Report. • Mehrere schwere Angriffe der Russen sind abgeschlagen und Lt. Spielmann wird namentlich am 15. März 1941 im Wehrmachtsbericht genannt.

A Soviet heavy KV I, which was knocked out by the 1st Platoon of the *1./StuG.Abt. 197* on 14 March 1941. • Schwerer russischer Panzer vom Typ KW I, abgeschossen vom 1. Zug der 1. Batterie am 14. März 1941.

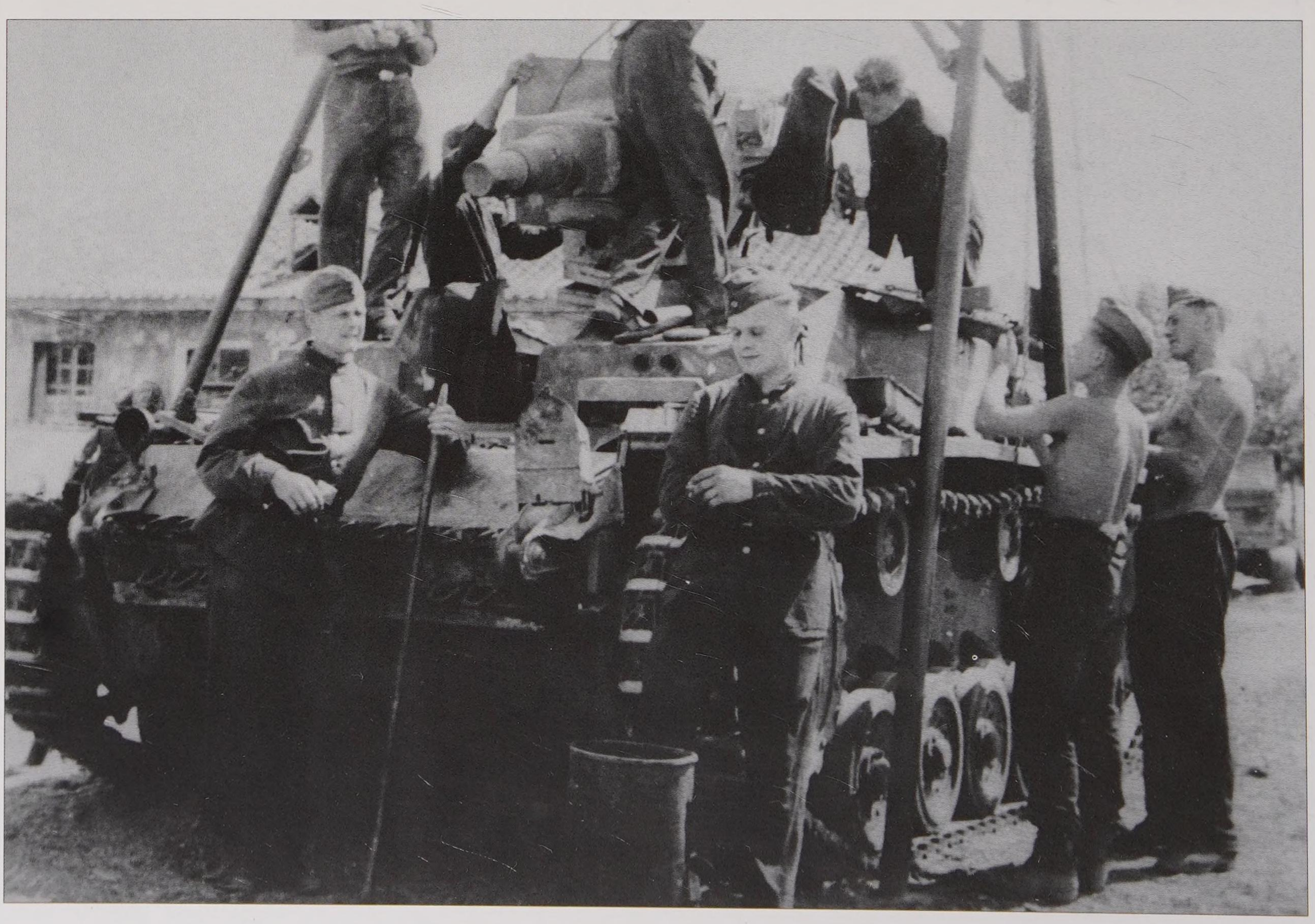
[Fotos via Schleicher]

[Foto via Busch]

The battalion reported having kocked out its 200th enemy armored vehicle on 4 April 1942. On behalf of the terriific performance of the 1./Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197, Leutnant Spielmann was awarded the Knight's Cross at Stary-Krim on 12 April 1942. • Die Abteilung meldet am 4. April 1942 ihren 200sten Panzerabschuss. Für die hervorragenden Leistungen der 1. Batterie

[Fotos via Tams]

All maintenance activites remained in Ukrainka in the spring and summer of 1942, since ideal conditions were present there for repairing and maintaining the vehicles. • Der gesamte Werkstattbetrieb der Abteilung verbleibt im Frühjahr und Sommer 1942 in Ukrainka, da hier ideale Bedingungen zur Instandsetzung und zur Reparatur der Fahrzeuge vorhanden sind.



[Foto via Cantz]

Members of the Headquarters Battery prepare their vehicles for departure to the Kerch Front at the end of April 1942.

• Angehöriger der Stabsbatterie beim Fertigmachen der Fahrzeuge zum Abmarsch an die Kertsch-Front Ende April 1942.

A march halt by the ammunition section of the *3./StuG.Abt. 197* on its way to Kerch. • Marschhalt der Muni-Kolonne der 3. Batterie auf dem Weg nach Kertsch.

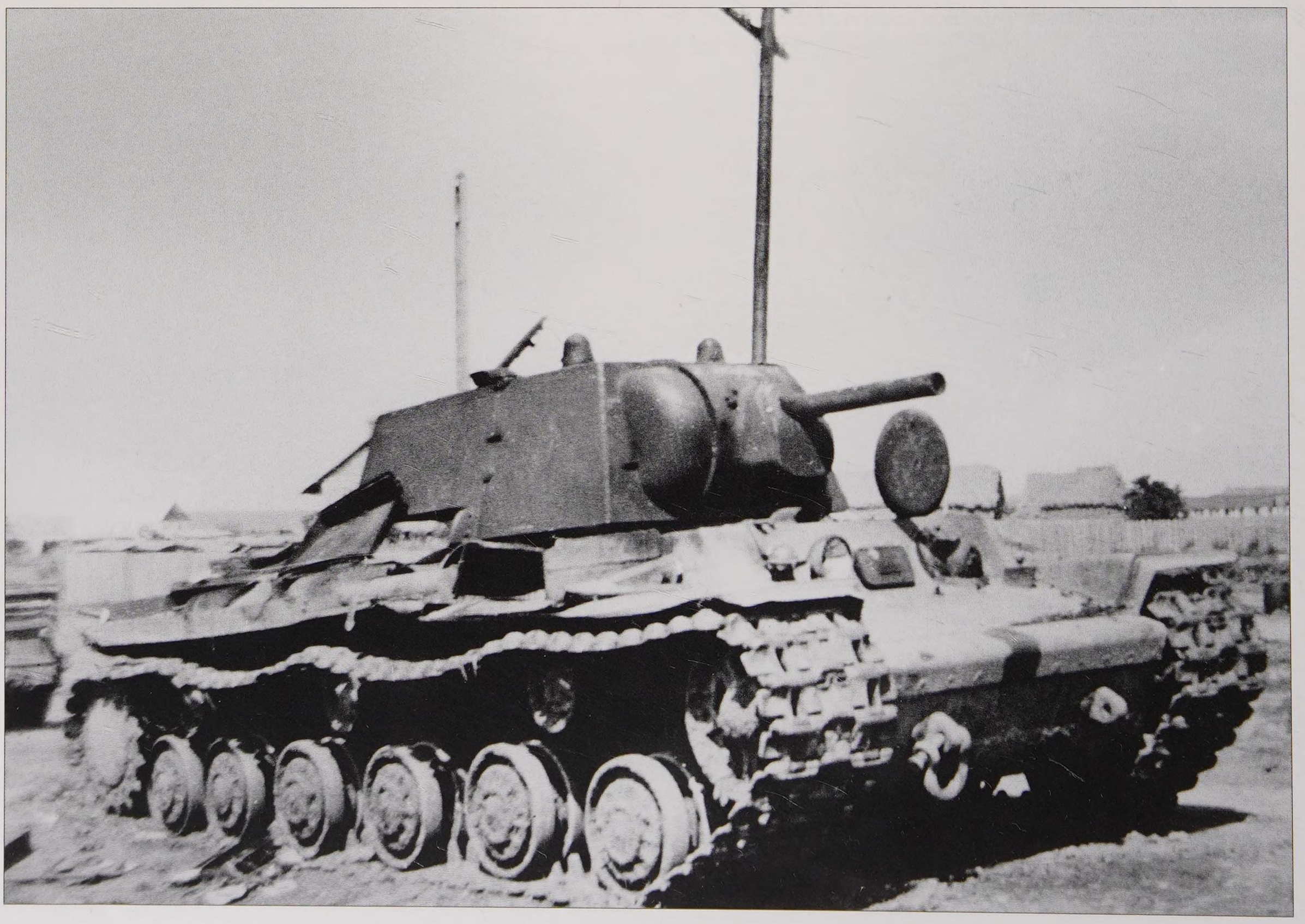
[Foto via Rist]

The radio section gets briefed on the terrain in front of the Parpatsch Position. • Einweisung beim Funktrupp in das Kampfgelände vor der Parpatsch-Stellung.

[Foto via Busch]

A 44-ton KV I is checked out after its duel with the "B" Gun on 10 May 1942. • Nach dem Duell mit dem B-Geschütz am 10. Mai 1942 wird der Gegner, ein 44 t KW I besichtigt.

[Foto via Schlabs]



At the front trenches at Kerch with a sidecar motorcycle. • Mit dem Beiwagenkrad im vordersten Graben bei Kertsch.

Overrun Soviet trench positions on 20 May 1942 after the end of the fighting on the Kerch Peninsula. • Überrollte russische Grabenstellung am 20.5.1942, nach Beendigung der Kämpfe auf der Halbinsel Kertsch.

[Fotos via Busch]

[Fotos via Busch]

Nebelwerfer occupy their positions. The preparations for the large-scale offensive against Sevatopol have started. • *Nebelwerfer* beziehen ihre Stellungen. Die Vorbereitungen zum Großangriff auf Sewastopol laufen an.

The attack against the most formidable fortress in the world started on 7 June 1942. Salvoes of rockets are hurled in the direc-tionof the Soviet positions. • Am 7. Juni 1942 beginnt der Angriff auf die größte Festung der Welt. Werfersalven heulen in Richtung der sowjetischen Stellungen.

[Fotos via Busch]

The combat elements moved out in the early morning hours of 7 June 1942. Elements of the Headquarters Battery remained behind in the Melzer Defile. • Die Gefechtsteile sind

[Fotos via Busch]

In an attack position together with antitank elements from *Infanterie-Regiment 121*. • Zusammen mit den Panzerjägern des Inf.Rgt. 121 in Bereitstellung.

The thermometer was at 30 degrees (86 degrees Fahrenheit). The battery First Sergeant brought beer up front. It was a pleasant surprise that no one had counted on. • Das Thermometer zeigt über 30°C. Der Hauptfeldwebel bringt Bier nach vorne. Eine wohltuende Überraschung, mit der niemand gerechnet hat.

Progress was slow. Soviet pockets of resistance had to be eliminated again and again at almost pointblank range. • Es geht nur langsam vorwärts. Immer wieder müssen russische Widerstandsnester auf kürzeste Entfernung ausgeschaltet werden.

Hidden Soviet bunker complexes prevent further progress. The demolitions carriers of a radio-controlled company get prepared to go into action. • Versteckte Bunkeranlagen der Sowjets versperren das Weiterkommen. Die Ladungsleger einer Funklenk-Kompanie stellen sich zum Einsatz bereit.

[Fotos via Appel]

[Foto via Schlabs]

The badly damaged "D" Gun of the *1./StuG.Abt. 197* after the attack on the GPU Fort. A return roller has been shot off. • Das schwer beschädigte D-Geschütz der *1./StuG.Abt. 197* mit der abrasierten Stützrolle nach dem Angriff auf das Fort G.P.U.

The "E" Gun of the *3./StuG.Abt. 197*, which has been shot to pieces, is examined at the maintenance facility. • Bei der Werkstatt in Ukrainka wird das völlig zusammengeschossene E-Geschütz der *3./StuG.Abt. 197* begutachtet.

[Foto via Schlabs]

[Foto via Schlabs]

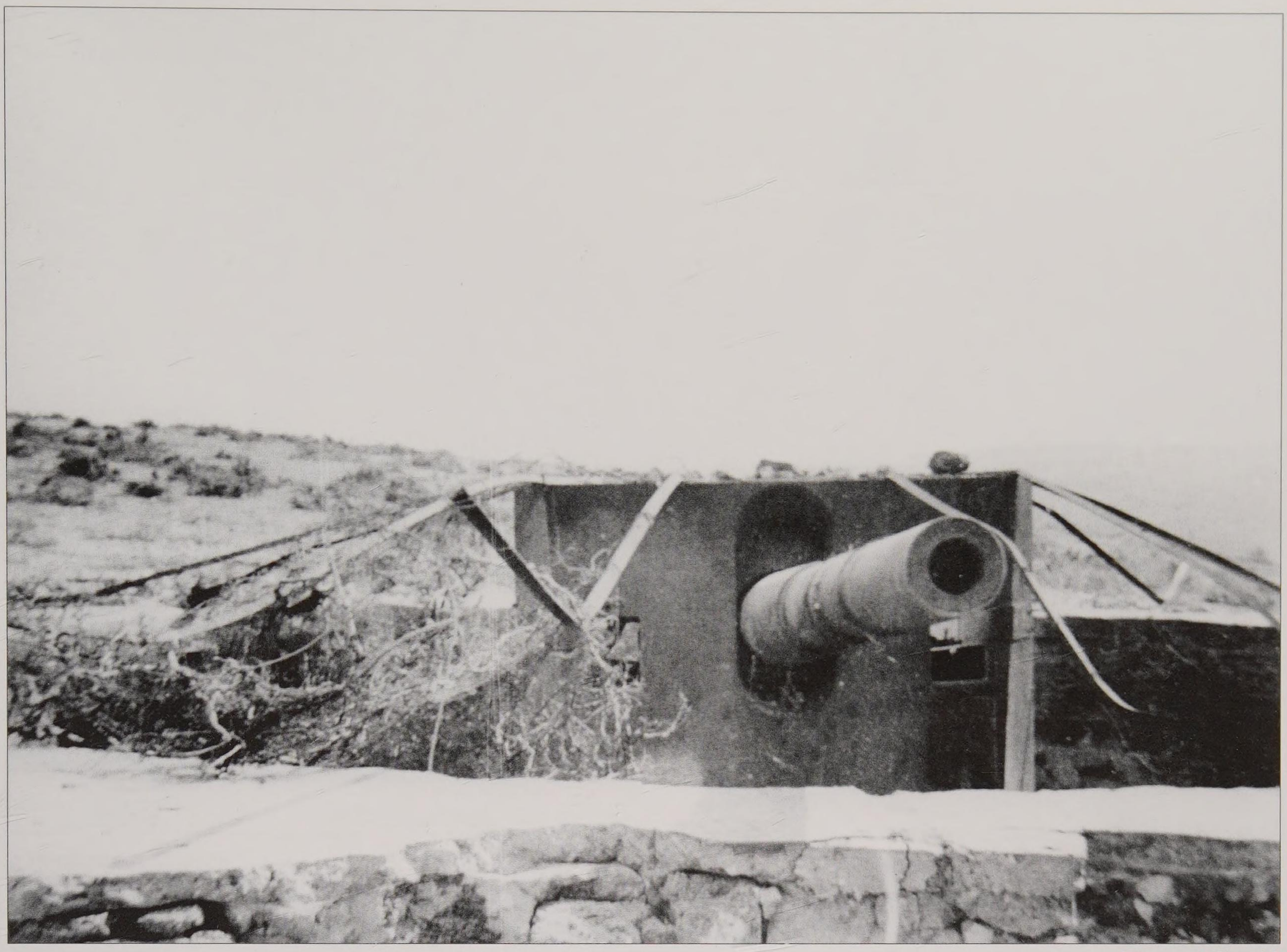
Super-heavy German artillery fires on the fortress and casemate positions all around Sevastopol. • Mit schwersten Kalibern feuert die deutsche Artillerie auf die Festungs- und Kasemattenanlagen rings um Sewastopol.

The Soviet defenders put up bitter resistance, despite their almost hopeless situation. This gun of the *3./StuG.Abt. 190* was destroyed by a direct hit on its basic load of ammunition. • Die russischen Verteidiger wehren sich trotz ihrer fast aussichtslosen Lage weiterhin verbissen. Durch einen Volltreffer in die Munition wird dieses Geschütz der *3./StuG.Abt. 190* zerstört.

[Foto via Schlabs]

[Foto via Weniger]

The Sapun Hills are on fire. The *Nordnase* (Northern Nose), the *Kapellenberg* (Chapel Mountain) and the Kamary Depression are the hot spots on the battlefield. • Die Sapun-Höhen brennen. *Nordnase*, *Kapellenberg* und die Kamary-Höhlen sind die Brennpunkte der Schlacht. Nach der Einnahme der beherrschenden Höhen ist das Tor zur Stadt Sewastopol geöffnet.



[Fotos via Busch]

Overrun Soviet position in the belt of fortifications around the city. • Überrannte russische Stellung im Festungsgürtel der Stadt.

A dud from a 30.5-centimeter shell is examined. • Ein Blindgänger vom Kaliber 30,5 cm wird begutachtet.

[Fotos via Schlabs]

One fortress strongpoint after the other was eliminated by the use of the 60-centimeter howitzer *Karl* and the 80-centimeter cannon *Dora*. • Unter Einsatz des Mörsers *Karl* (60 cm) und der Kanone *Dora* (80 cm) wird ein Festungswerk nach dem anderen ausgeschaltet.

[Fotos via Schlabs]

Members of the battalion view Fort "Maxim Gorki II", which was destoryed. • Angehörige der StuG.Abt.197 besichtigen das zerstörte Fort *Maxim Gorki II*.

[Fotos via Schlabs]

The fall of the city and the fortress was announced on 3 July 1942. *Hauptmann* Steinwachs, together with his officers, visits the scenes of the fighting. • Der endgültige Fall der Stadt und der Festung Sewastopol wird am 3. Juli 1942 verkündet. Hauptmann Steinwachs besichtigt im Kreise seiner Offiziere die Kampfstätten.

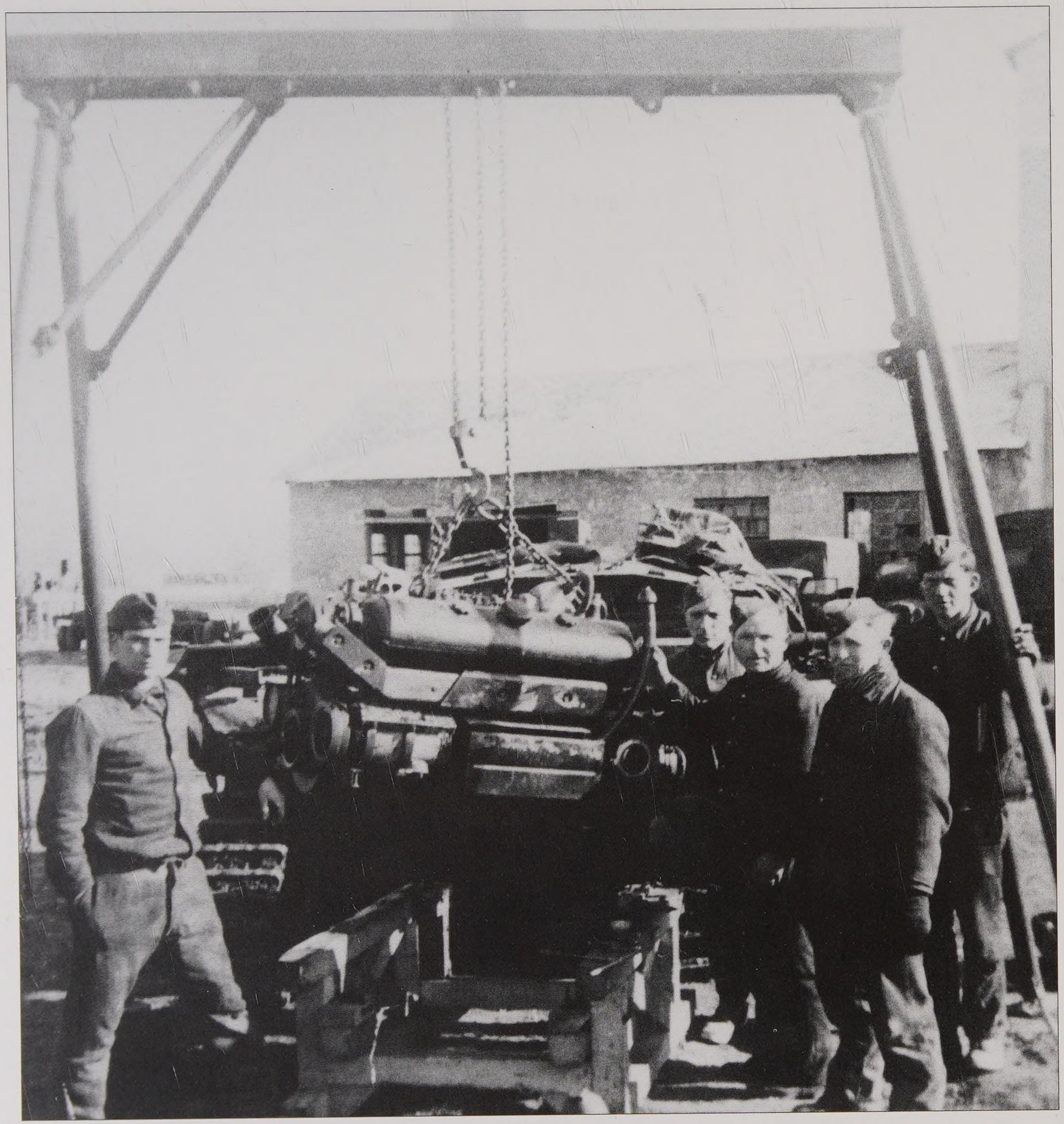
Members of the *1./StuG.Abt. 197* pose for a group photograph at the conclusion of the fighting. • Nach dem Ende der Kampfhandlungen haben sich Angehörige der 1. Batterie für ein Erinnerungsfoto aufgestellt.

[Fotos via Schlabs]

A training film was produced by the German Army High Command entitled "Asaault Guns and Engineers". *StuG.Abt. 197* was featured in the film, which was shot around the tank ditch some 300 meters north of Ukrainka. • Auf Befehl des OKH wertet die Abteilung 197 ihre Erfahrungen in einem Lehrfilm *Sturmgeschütze und Pioniere* aus. Die Aufnahmen werden im Gelände um den Panzergraben 300 m nördlich Ukrainka gemacht.

[Fotos via Schlabs]

An *ad hoc* element from the battalion was sent to Arma-Eli for shooting scenes for the training film. The assault gunners worked with an element from the *50. Inf.Div.*. Commanding the ad hoc battery was *Oberleutnant* Wegelin. • Die gemischte Einheit der Abteilung ist zu Filmaufnahmen für den Lehrfilm mit der *50. Inf.Div.* nach Arma-Eli kommandiert. Die Führung der zusammengestellten Batterie hat Oblt. Wegelin.



Although the vehicles were brand new from the factory, the engines had to be checked and adjusted by the maintenance facility. • Obwohl die Fahrzeuge fabrikneu sind, müssen die Motoren von der Werkstatt überprüft und eingestellt werden.

[Fotos via Appel]

Maintenance is performed on the first long-barreled assault guns that were sent to Ukrainka. • Wartungsarbeiten an den ersten neuen Langrohrgeschützen, die in Ukrainka zugeführt werden.

[Fotos via Henning]

After test firing the guns, maintenance was performed on the valuable new vehicles. • Nach dem Einschießen erfolgt die Pflege und die Wartung des wertvollen, neuen Gerätes.

All of the battalion started to be loaded on trains on 30 July 1942. • Am 30. Juli 1942 beginnt die Verladung der geamten Abteilung 197 auf der Krim.

[Foto via Cantz]

The transport trains headed for the central sector of the Eastern Front. • Die Transportzüge rollen in Richtung Mittelabschnitt.

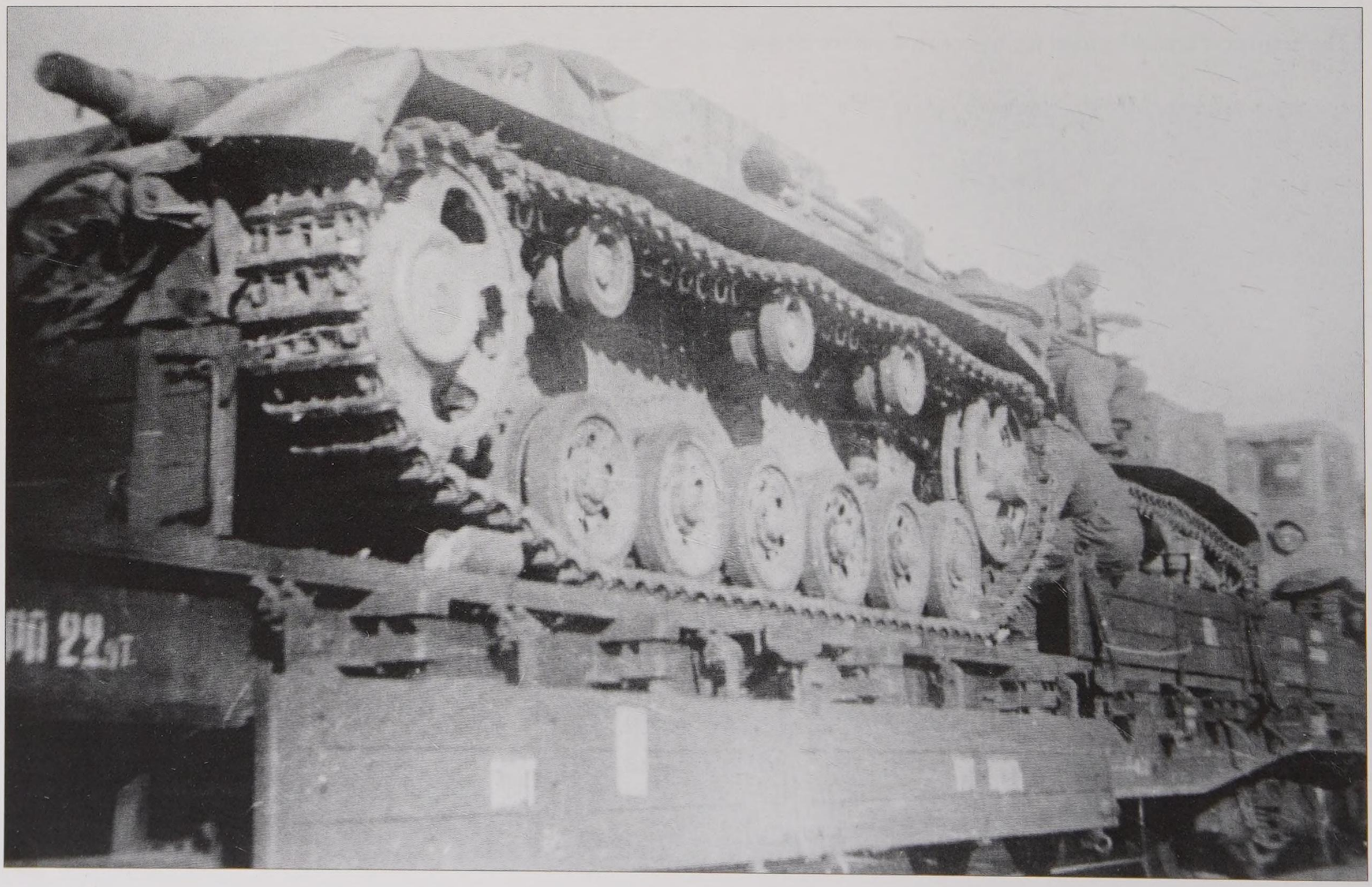
[Foto via Appel]

[Foto via Zimmermann]

During the movement of the *1./StuG.Abt. 197*. • Während des Transportes der 1. Batterie.

In the meantime, the battalion had collected a number of captured vehicles, such as the chassis of an American Lend-lease Stuart tank and the proven Soviet STZ-5 prime mover. • Von der Abteilung werden zwischenzeitlich mehrere Beutefahrzeuge mitgeführt, wie etwa das Fahrgestell eines Stuart-Panzer aus amerikanischer Fertigung und die bewährten russischen Artillerieschlepper STZ-5.

[Foto via Busch]



The new long-barreled assault guns of the *3./StuG.Abt. 197* during the rail movement. • Die neuen Langrohrgeschütze der 3. Batterie auf dem Transport.

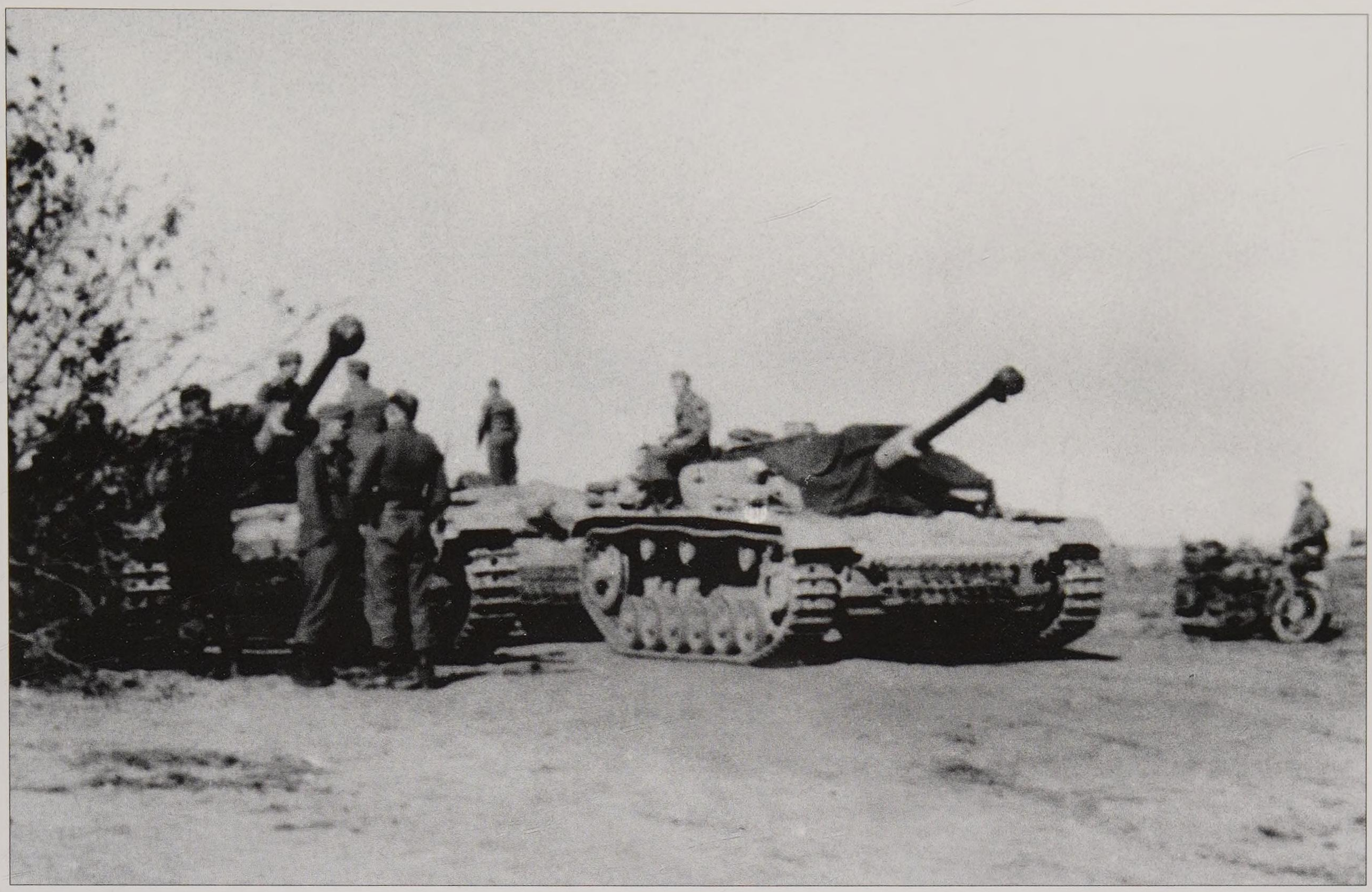
[Foto via Appel]

[Foto via Appel]

Once again on Ukrainian soil-the trains stops at Saporoshje. • Wieder auf ukrainischem Gebiet. Zughalt bei Saporoshje.

Unloading at Korowino, some 40 kilometers from Kursk. • Ausladen in Korowino, etwa 40 km vor Kursk.

[Foto via Biermann]

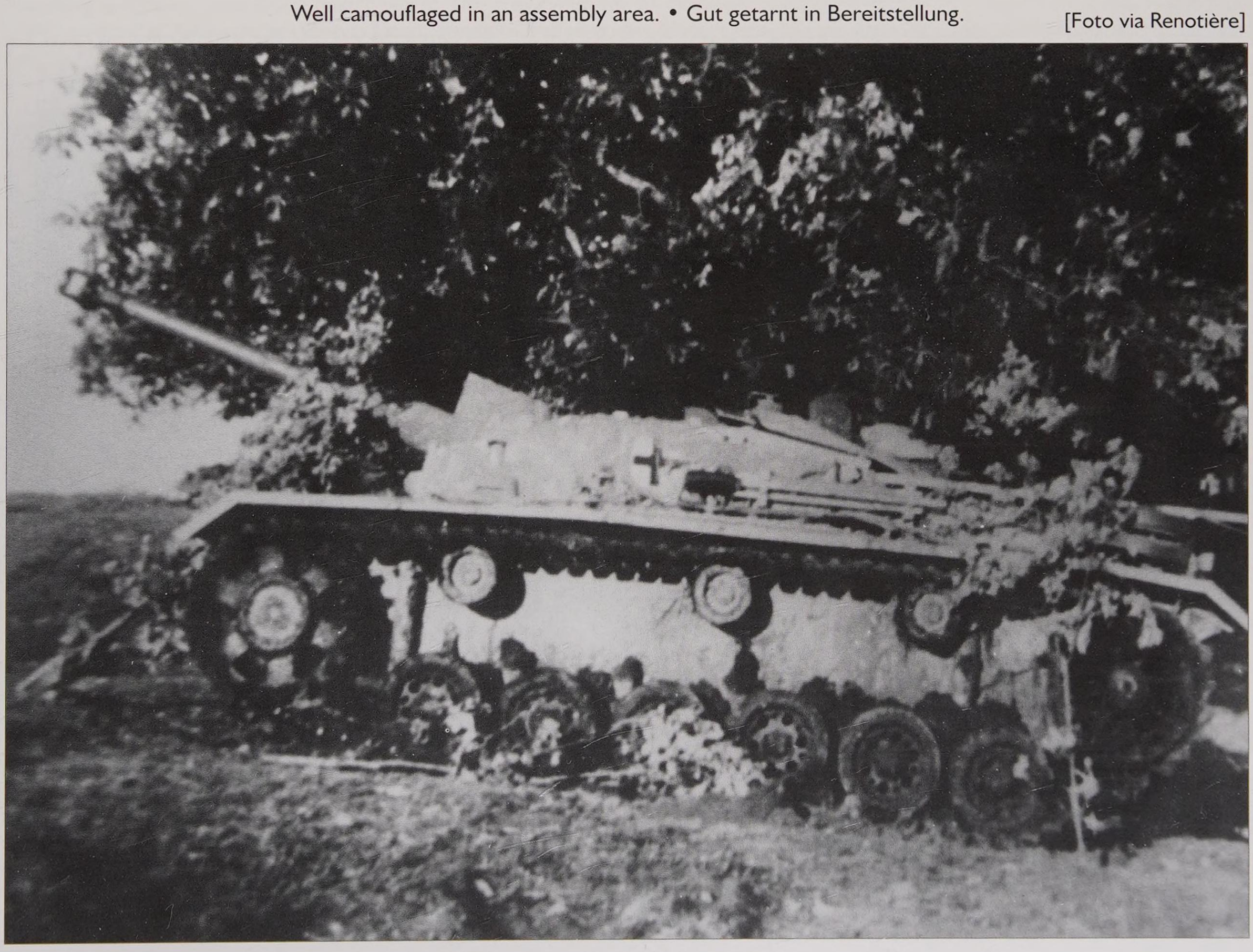


[Foto via Biermann]

Taking quarters with the combat trains at Semljansk. • Unterziehen mit dem Gefechtstross bei Semljansk.

Well camouflaged in an assembly area. • Gut getarnt in Bereitstellung.

[Foto via Renotière]



[Foto via Zimermann]

Personnel of the *1./StuG.Abt. 197* in front of their long-barreled gun in the summer of 1942. • Angehörige der 1. Batterie vor ihrem Langrohrgeschütz im Sommer 1942.

Waiting for orders. A crewmember uses the time to sunbathe. • Warten auf den Einsatzbefehl. Ein Besatzungsmitglied nutzt die Zeit zum Sonnenbaden.

[Foto via Tams]

[Fotos via Madaus]

On 14 August 1942, the "A" Gun of *Oberfeldwebel* Madaus was hit in the engine copartment. This set the vehicle on fire, with the resulting explosion completely destroying it. The crew was able to dismount unharmed before that happened. • Am 14. August 1942 erhält das A-Geschütz (Owm. Madaus) einen Treffer in den Motorraum, der es in Brand setzt und dann durch Explosion völlig zerstört. Zuvor gelingt es der Besatzung unverletzt auszusteigen.

[Foto via Cantz]

Leutnant Loeck's gun is in position. On 28 August 1942, the crew succeeded in knocking out five Soviet KV I's. • Das Geschütz von Lt. Loeck in Bereitstellung. Am 28. August 1942 gelingt der Besatzung der Abschuss von 5 russ. KW. I Panzern.

The Lend-Lease Program began to show its ffect. Increasing numbers of American and British started showing up on the battlefield. • Der alliierte-russische Leih- und Pachtvertrag zeigt seine Auswirkungen. Es treten auf russischer Seite verstärkt Panzermodelle amerikanischer oder britischer Produktion auf.

[Foto via Busch]

The *3./StuG.Abt. 197* has formed up for a vehicle inspection. The battalion was then sent north into the area of operations of the *2. Panzer-Armee* (north of Orel). • Die 3. Batterie ist zum Fahrzeugappell aufgefahren. Die Abteilung wird in den Raum der 2. Panzerarmee nördlich Orel in Marsch gesetzt.

Two of the most-tested vehicle drivers of the *3./StuG.Abt. 197*, Paul Rost and Heinrich Appel. *Obergefreiter* Appel (right) was the driver for the Battery Commander. He continued to maintain that status during 1943-1945, when the battalion switched to the *Ferdinand* and *Elefant* tank destroyers. • Zwei der bewährtesten Panzerfahrer der 3. Batterie. Paul Rost und Heinrich Appel. Ogefr. Appel (rechts) ist der *Chef-Fahrer*. Eine Funktion, die er auch in den späteren Einsatzjahren 1943-45 mit dem Jagdpanzer *Ferdinand* und dem Jagdpanzer *Jagdtiger* beibehält.

[Fotos via Appel]

In front of the billeting area of the *3./StuG.Abt. 197* in Orel on 2 October 1942. *Obergefreiter* Appel is sitting on the main gun.

• Vor der Unterkunft der 3. Batterie in Orel am 2. Oktober 1942. Auf dem Kanonenrohr sitzt Ogefr. Appel.

[Fotos via Appel]

[Foto via Schulmeyer]

In front of the maintenance bays at Utrikowka at the beginning of November 1942. A few short-barreled guns had been received from *StuG.Abt. 202* and inspected by the maintenance personnel.
• Vor den Werkstatthallen in Utrikowa Anfang November 1942. Von der Stug.Abt. 202 werden einige Kurzrohr-Geschütze übernommen und von der Werkstatt hergerichtet.

[Fotos via Schulmeyer]

The assault guns were outfitted with the so-called *Ostkettern* - *"Eastern Tracks"* - which had just arrived. • Die Sturmgeschütze werden mit den neu angelieferten *Ostketten* ausgerüstet.

25 November 1942: *StuG.Abt. 197* celebtated its 2nd anniversary of existance. To the left: *Gefreiter* Schulmeyer. • 25. November 1942. Die *StuG.Abt. 197* feiert ihr 2-jähriges bestehen. Links Gefr. Schulmeyer.

[Foto via Beck]

The mess vehicles and the vehicle housing the orderly room were made ready for rail trasnport. The orders were rescinded a short while later, however, and the battalion remained in Utrikowka. • Die Küchen- und Schreibstubenwagen werden verladebereit gemacht. Der Befehl wird jedoch wenig später widerrufen und die Abteilung verbleibt in Utrikowa.

Preparations for an anti-partisan operation on 17 December 1942, which was also called off. In the middle: Erich Bönike.
• Vorbereitung für ein Unternehmen zur Partisanenbekämpfung am 17.12.1942, welches aber ebenfalls abgesagt wird.
In der Mitte Erich Bönike.

[Foto via Caesar]

[Foto via Peters]

Adjusting for winter, the guns were camouflaged in white by the crews and personnel from the maintenance sections. • Die Geschütze werden von den Besatzungen und den Männern vom I-Trupp weiß getarnt und den Winterverhältnissen angepasst.

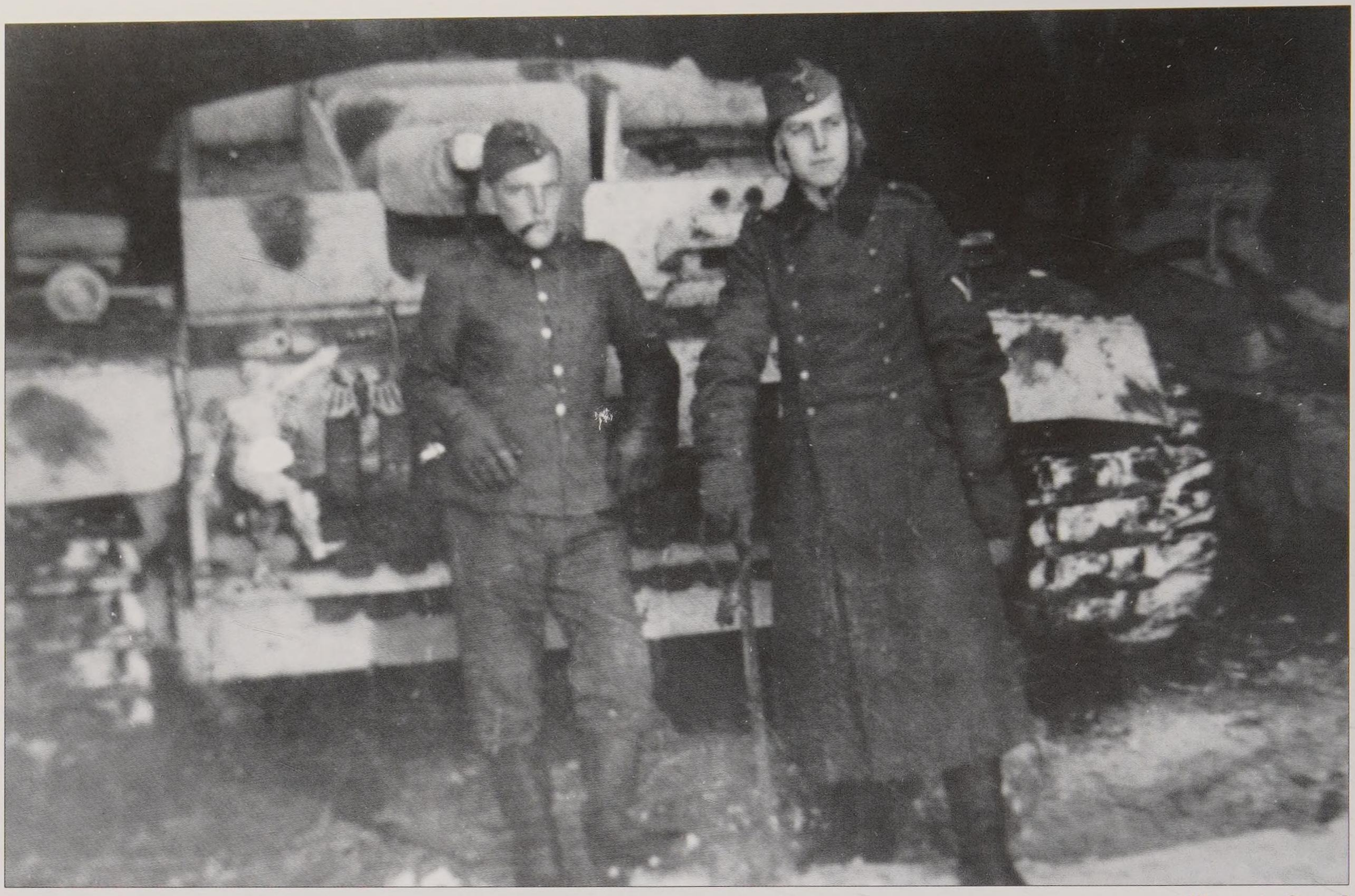
Z3, the vehicle of the Battery Officer, was still showing its summer camouflage in December 1942, however.

• Der Batterie-Führerwagen Z3 weist im Dezember 1942 aber noch immer die Sommertarnung auf.

[Foto via Riecker]

[Foto via Peters]

The Battery Officer's vehicle then also received a coat of winter camouflage paint. The whitewash was applied using hand brushes and paint brushes. The vehicle's base color can still be seen in spots. • Das BF-Geschütz erhält den Winteranstrich. Die weiße Tarnfarbe wird mit breiten Bürsten und Pinseln aufgetragen. Teilweise ist der Grundanstrich noch sichtbar.

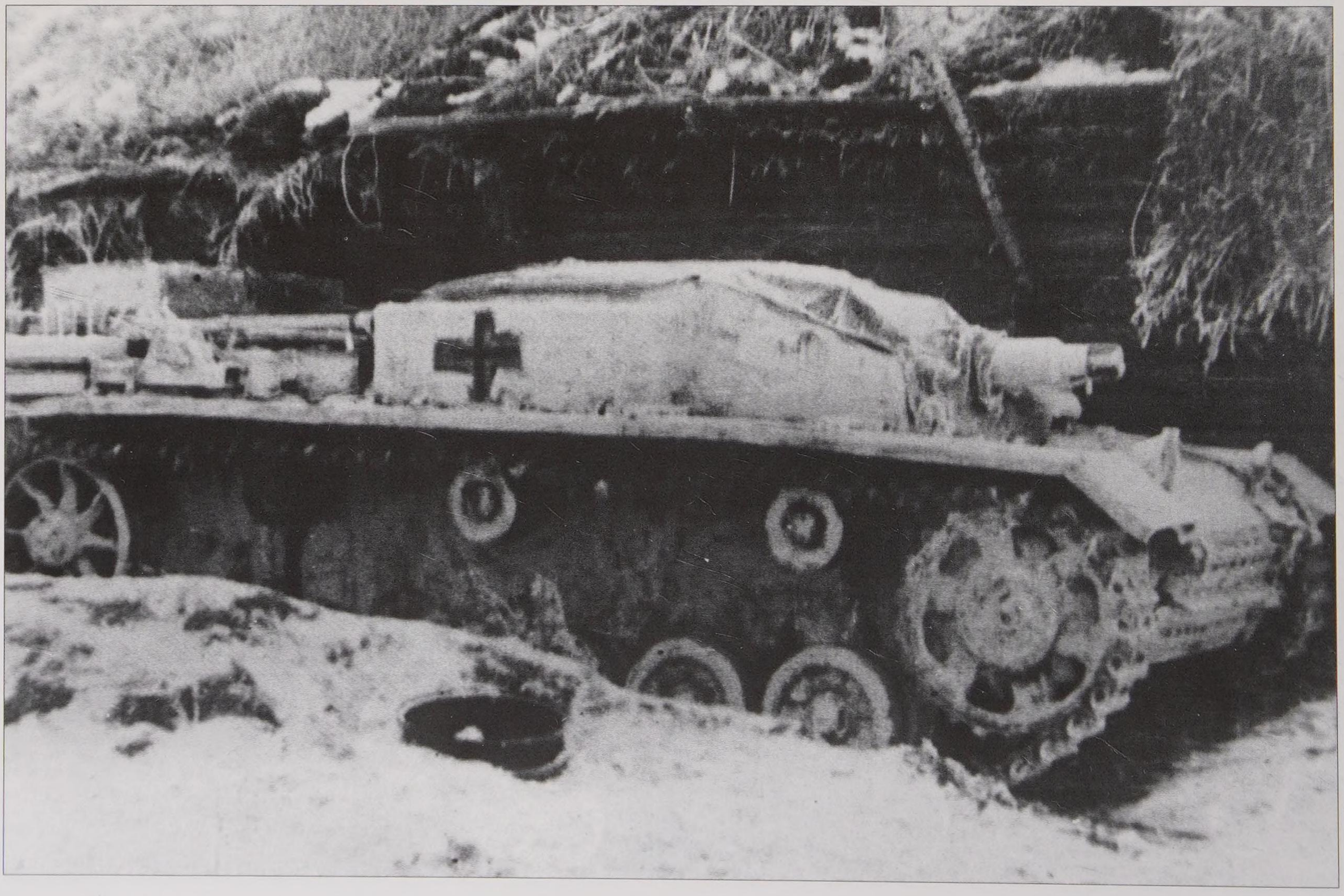


[Foto via Cantz]

The short-barreled guns were also given a coat of whitewash. In front: Walter Höppner and Josef Möller.
• Die Kurzrohr-Geschütze sind nun ebenfalls mit weißer Farbe versehen. Davor Walter Höppner und Josef Möller.

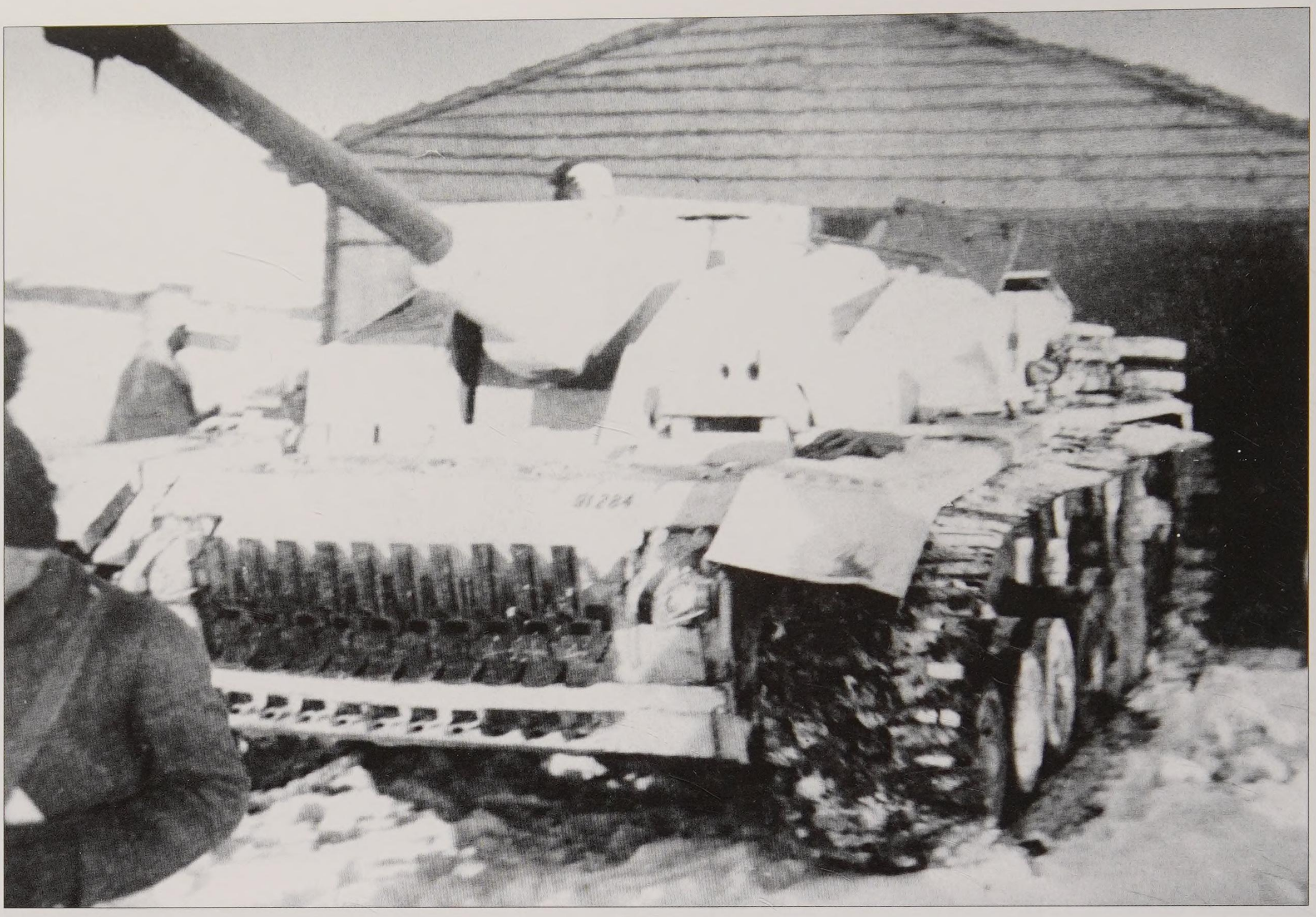
The *Balkenkreuz* was painted around. • Das Balkenkreuz als Hoheitszeichen ist im Anstrich ausgespart.

[Foto via Riecker]



Just before Christmas 1942, it was announced to the personnel of the batallion that their formation was being transferred back to Germany and converted to a "heavy battalion". • Kurz vor Weihnachten 1942 wird bekannt gegeben, dass die *StuG.Abt. 197* zurück nach Deutschland verlegt wird und dort in eine *schwere Abteilung* umgewandelt werden soll.

[Fotos via Peters]



All of the battalion's vehicles were to be transferred to StuG.Abt.270. • Sämtliche Rad- und Ketten-Fahrzeuge sollen der *StuG.Abt.270* übergeben werden.

[Fotos via Peters]

Peters, the battalion administrator, who provided most of these images, poses in front of a long-barreled gun (chassis number 91284). • Rechnungsführer Peters, dem sehr viele dieser Aufnahmen zu verdanken sind, mit dem Langrohr-Sturmgeschütz (Fgstnr. 91284)

[Fotos via Peters]

From left to right: ?, Willi Löffler and Otto Peters. At the scissors telescope in the gun is Heinz Henning. • V.l.n.r.: ?, Willi Löffler, Otto Peters. Am Scherenfernrohr im Geschütz Heinz Henning.

[Fotos via Peters]

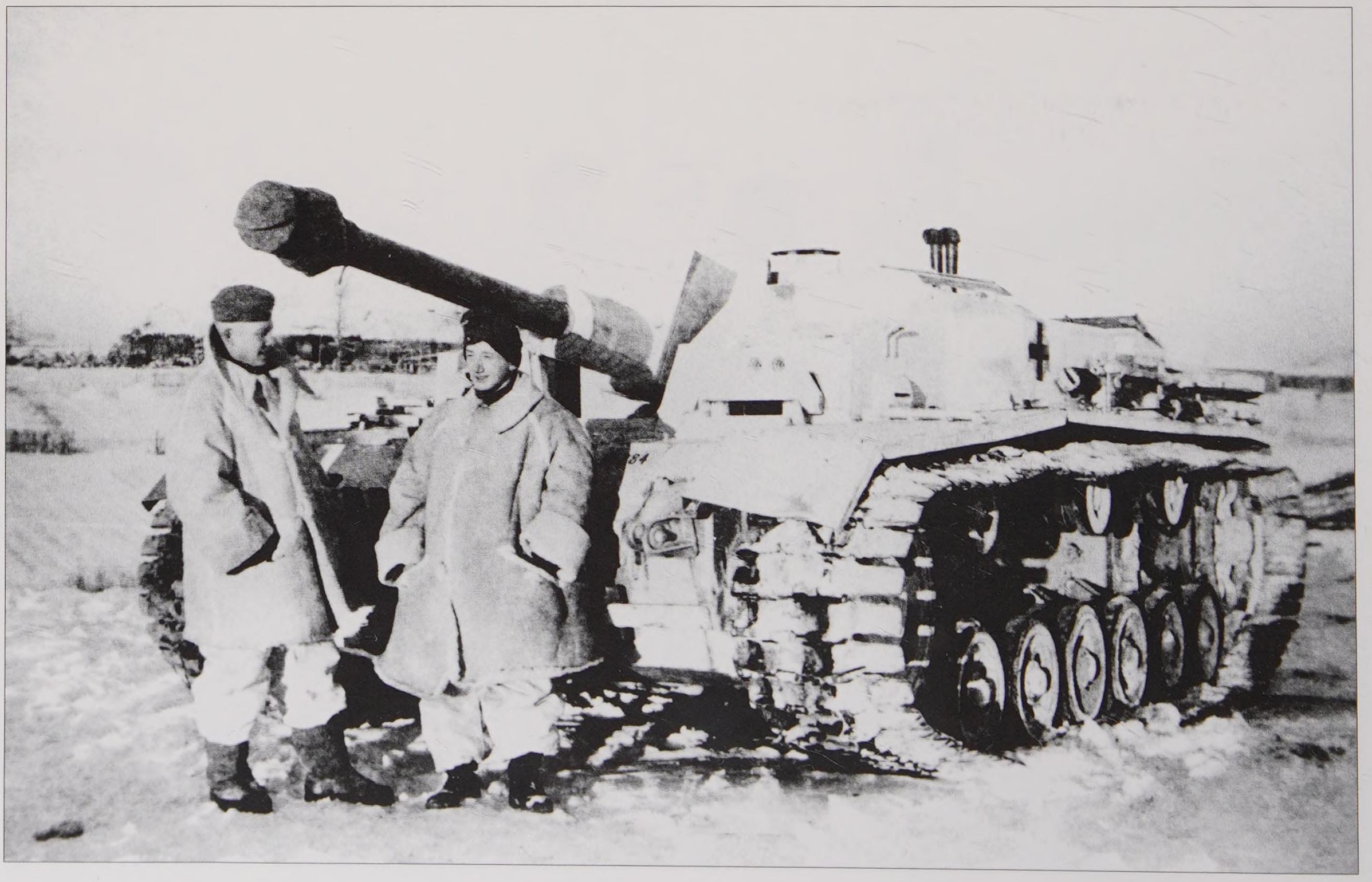
From left to right: Karl Schmidt, Anton Köble and Heinz Henning. • V.l.n.r.: Karl Schmidt, Anton Köble, Heinz Henning.

[Fotos via Henning]

[Foto via Titus]

From left to right: Höppner, Magg, Riecker, Cantz and Gärtner. They were all members of the *1./StuG.Abt. 197.* • V.l.n.r.: Höppner, Magg, Riecker, Cantz, Gärtner. Alles Angehörige der 1. Batterie.

Anton Köble and Alois Schäfer (assault-gun driver) in front of a long-barreled gun. • Anton Köble und Alois Schäfer (Panzerfahrer) vor dem Langrohrgeschütz.



[Fotos via Henning]

The last time for providing security for an anti-partisan operation. *Unteroffizier* Henning was deignated as the gun commander.
• Letzte Sicherungsfahrt zur Partisanenbekämpfung. Uffz. Henning ist als Geschützführer eingeteilt.

Exercise in the Ipot-Wyssokoje area with the newly formed *3./ StuG.Abt. 270*. • Übung im

Getting the guns prepared for transfer to *StuG.Abt. 270* in January 1943. • Fertigmachen

[Foto via Schleicher]

Departure for a ski trip in the area around Spass-Demensk, just before New Year's 1942-1943. • Ausfahrt zur Ski-Partie in die Umgebung von Spass-Demensk, kurz vor dem Jahreswechsel 1942/43.

A few of the battalion officers in Utrikowka jst before Christmas 1942. From left to right: *Leutnant* Werner haberland (battalion adjutant); *Oberleutnant* Spielmann; *Hauptmann* Steinwachs; *Oberleutnant* Helmut Ulbricht; and ? • Einige der Offiziere der Stu. Gesch.Abt. 197 kurz vor dem Weihnachtsfest 1942 in Utrikowa. V.l.n.r.: Lt. Werner Haberland (Adjutant), Oblt. Johann Spielmann, Hauptmann Steinwachs, Oblt. Helmut Ulbricht, ?.

[Foto via Busch]

[Fotos via Busch]

Everyone is in the best of moods. The movement back to Germany is just around the corner. Here: *Oberleutnant* Spielmann and *Hauptmann* Steinwachs. • Alle sind bester Stimmung. Der Transport in die Heimat steht bereit und die Umbewaffnung in eine schwere

Oberleutnant Johann Spielmann, the Battery Commmander of the *1./StuG.Abt. 197*, while preparing

[Foto PK]

A large battalion party in Berlin at the Haus *"Vaterland"* in January 1943. *Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 197* has officially left the *Sturmartillerie* and is now a part of the *Panzertruppe as schwere Pz.Jg.Abt. 653*. • Große Abteilungsfeier in Berlin im Haus *Vaterland* anlässlich des Ausscheidens der *StuG.Abt. 197* aus der Waffengattung *Artillerie* und der Überstellung der Abteilung zur Panzerjäger-Truppe am 13. April 1943.

Oberstleutnant Heinrich Steinwachs was awarded the Knight's Cross on 15 April 1944 as the Commander of Panzer-Artillerie-Regiment 116. He dies on 6 January 1972 in his adopted country of South Africa. • Oberstleutnant z.V. Heinrich Steinwachs wird als Kommandeur des Pz.Art.Rgt. 116 am 15.4.1944 mit dem Ritterkreuz ausgezeichnet. Er stirbt am 6. Januar 1972 in seiner Wahlheimat Südafrika.

[Foto via Reissner]

Besitzzeugnis

Dem Gefreiten
(Dienstgrad)

Peter S c h a d e
(Vor- und Zuname)

3./Sturmgeschütz-Abt. 197
(Truppenteil)

wurde das

Sturmabzeichen

verliehen.

K.H.Qu., den 25. August 1942
(Ort und Datum)

Kell
(Unterschrift)

General der Artillerie und
Kd.General des VII. A.K.
(Dienstgrad und Dienststellung)

Gen. Kdo. VII. A. K.
Stempel

Im Namen des Führers und Obersten Befehlshabers der Wehrmacht

verleihe ich

dem

Gefreiten Peter S c h a d e

3./Sturmgeschütz-Abt.197

das

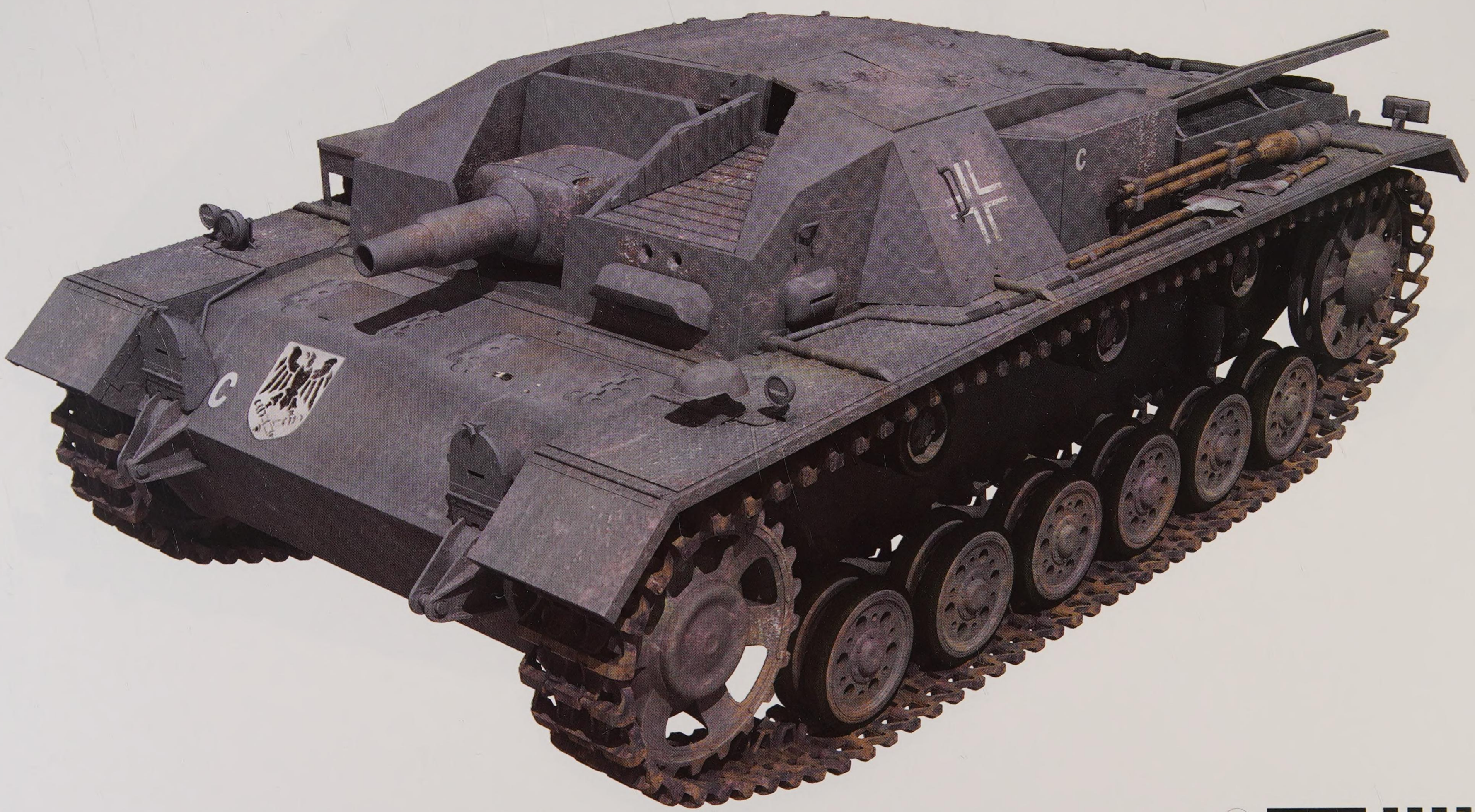
Eiserne Kreuz 2.Klasse

Auf der Krim, den 13.Juli 1942

(Dienstsiegel)

Dittmar.
(Dienstgrad und Dienststellung)
Gen.Lt. u. Kdr. der 24.3.D.

StuG.III Ausf. B (C-Geschütz), 1./StuG.Abt. 197, Brieg/Silesian, Germany, March, 1941



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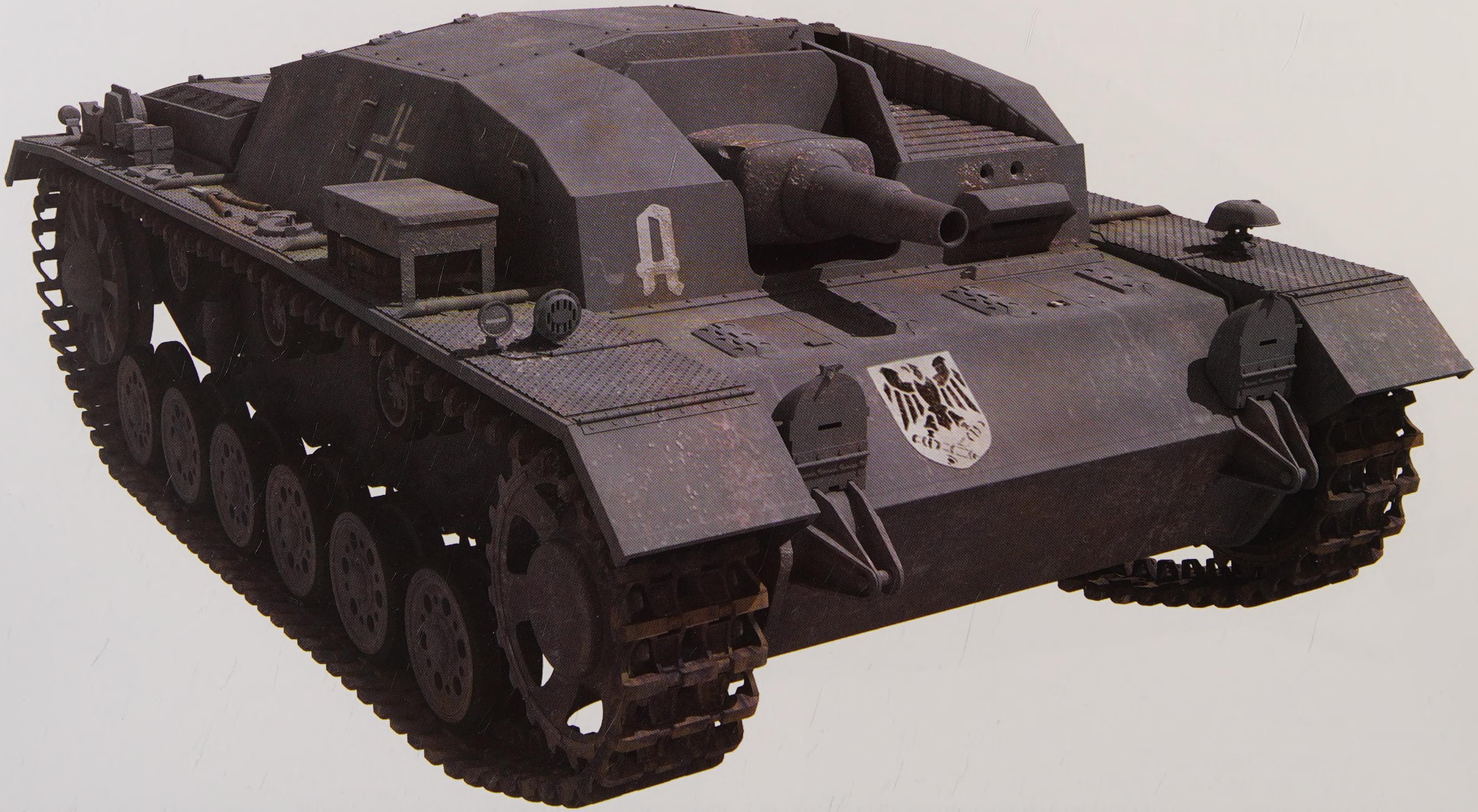
StuG.III Ausf. B (A-Geschütz, Geschützführer Wachtmeister Madaus) 1./StuG.Abt. 197, Yugoslavia, May, 1941



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Crimean Peninsula, Russia, 1942

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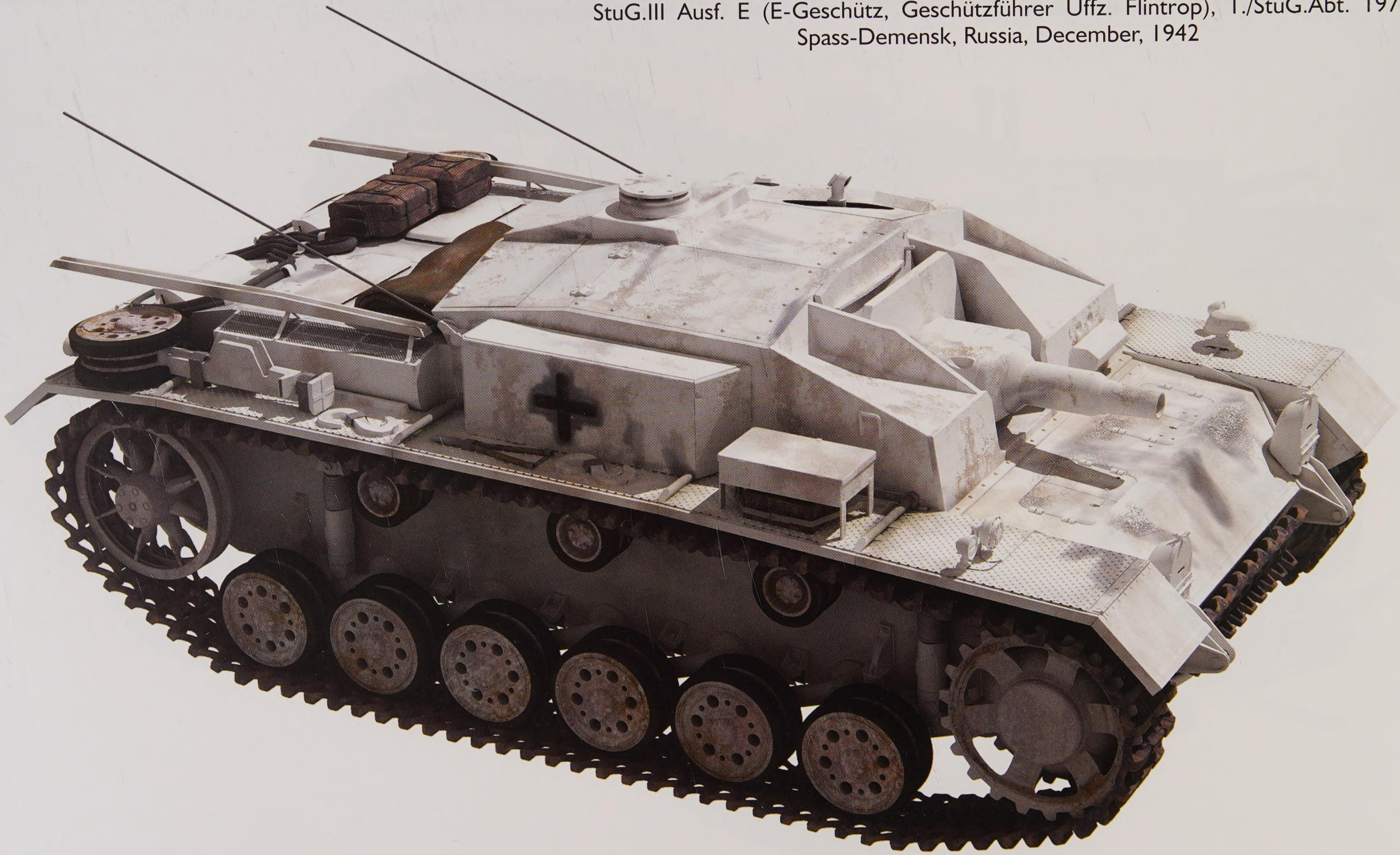
Spass-Demensk, Russia, December, 1942



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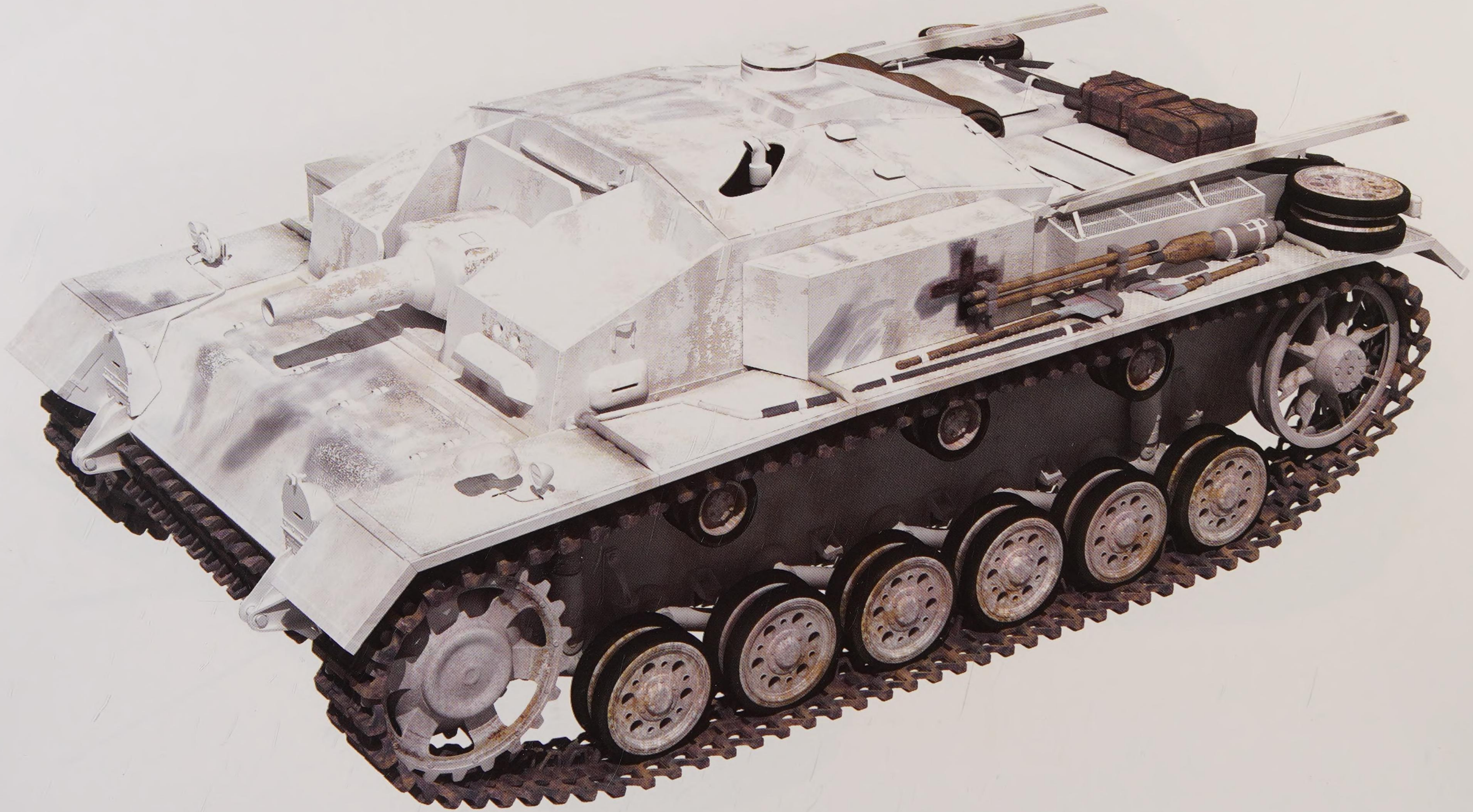
StuG.III Ausf. E (E-Geschütz, Geschützführer Uffz. Flintrop), 1./StuG.Abt. 197. Spass-Demensk, Russia, December, 1942



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StuG.III Ausf. F, (Geschützführer Wachtmeister Biermann), 3./StuG.Abt. 197, Crimean Peninsula, Russia, June, 1942

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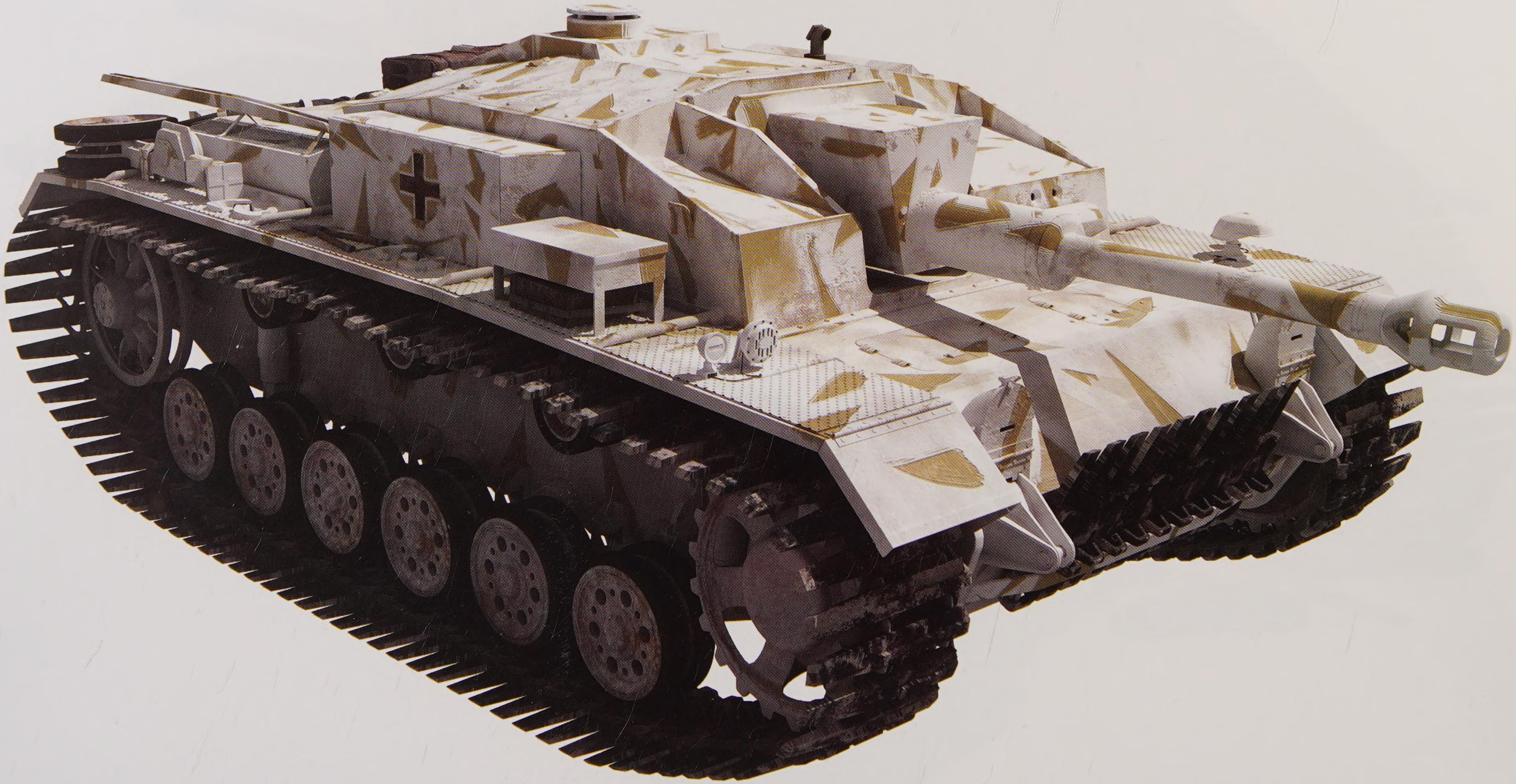

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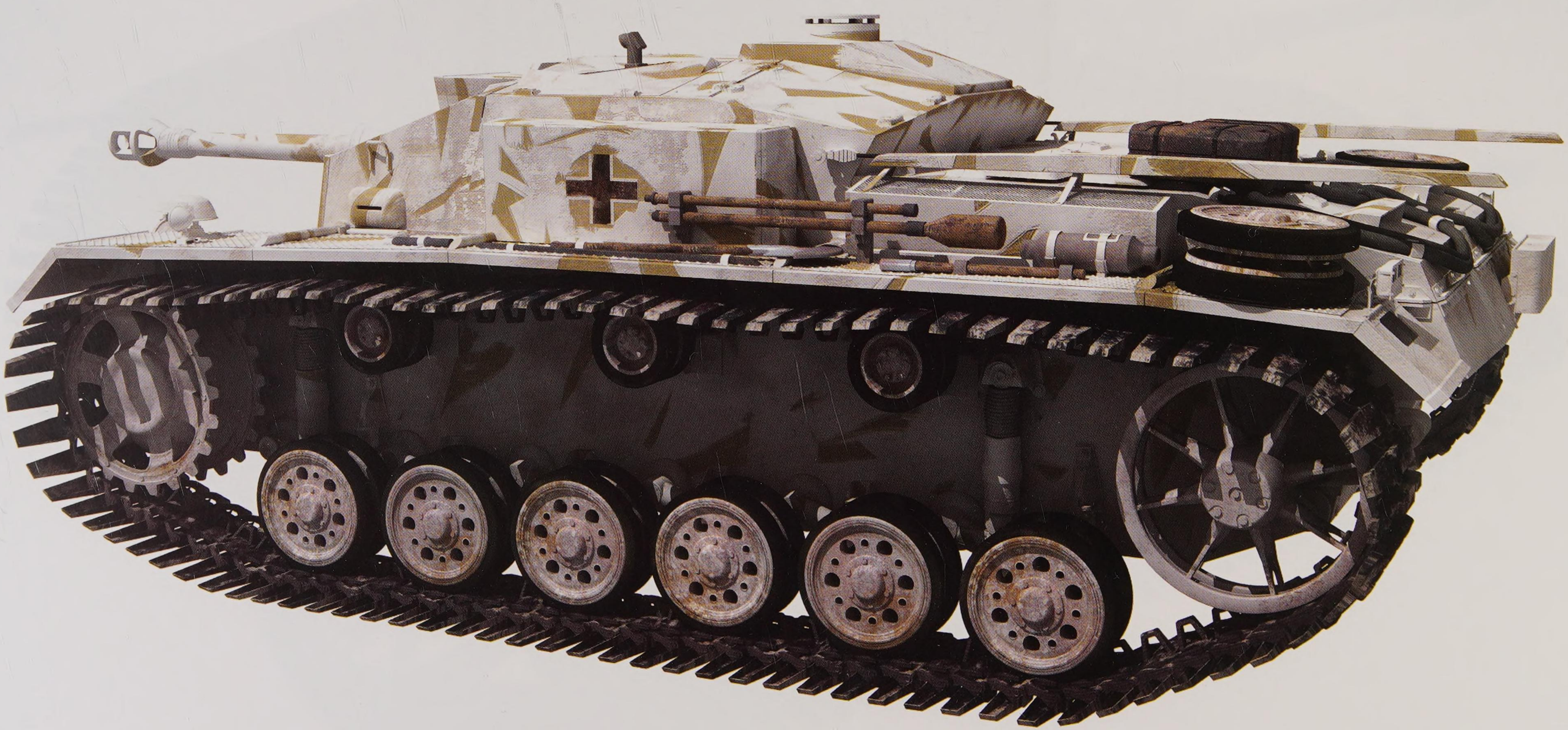

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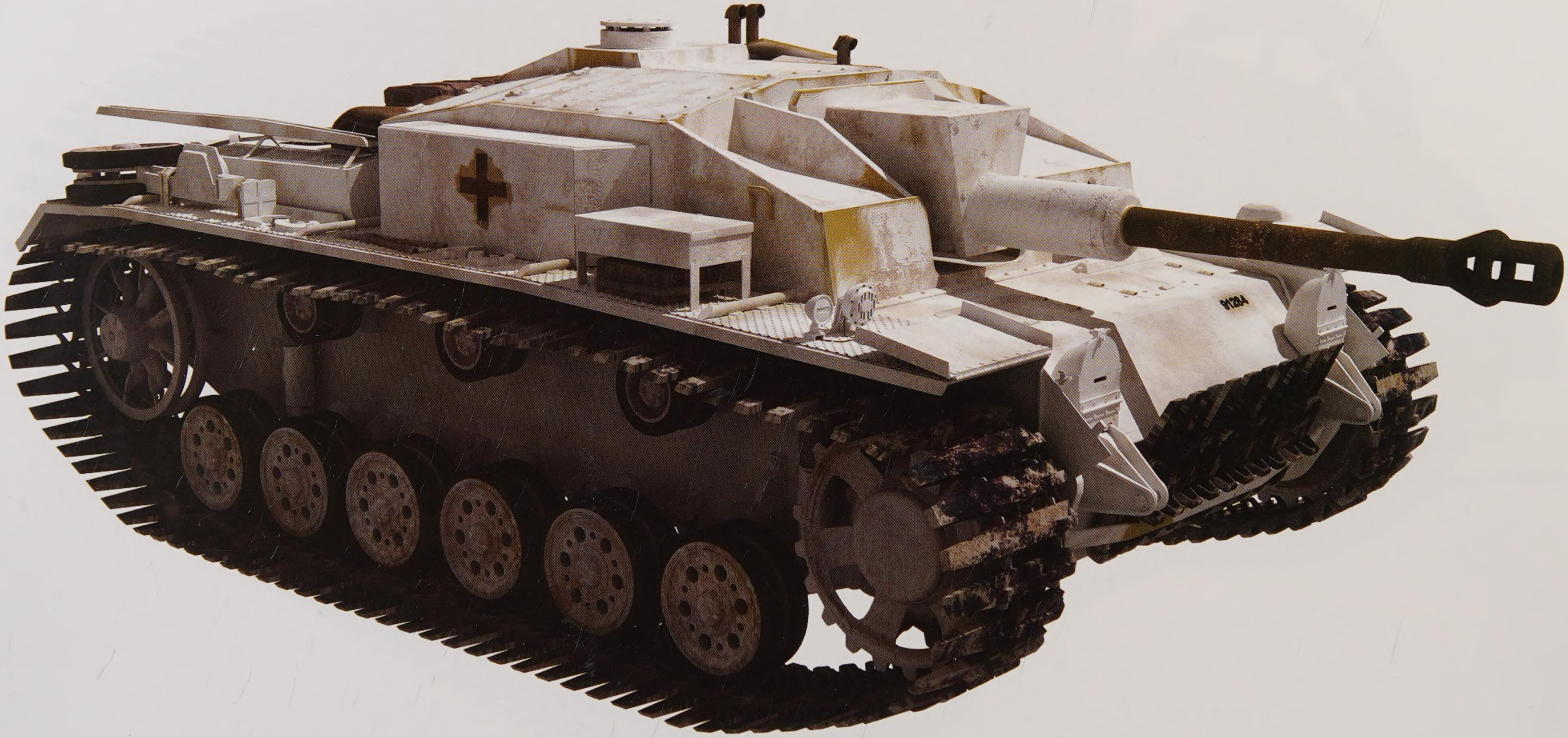

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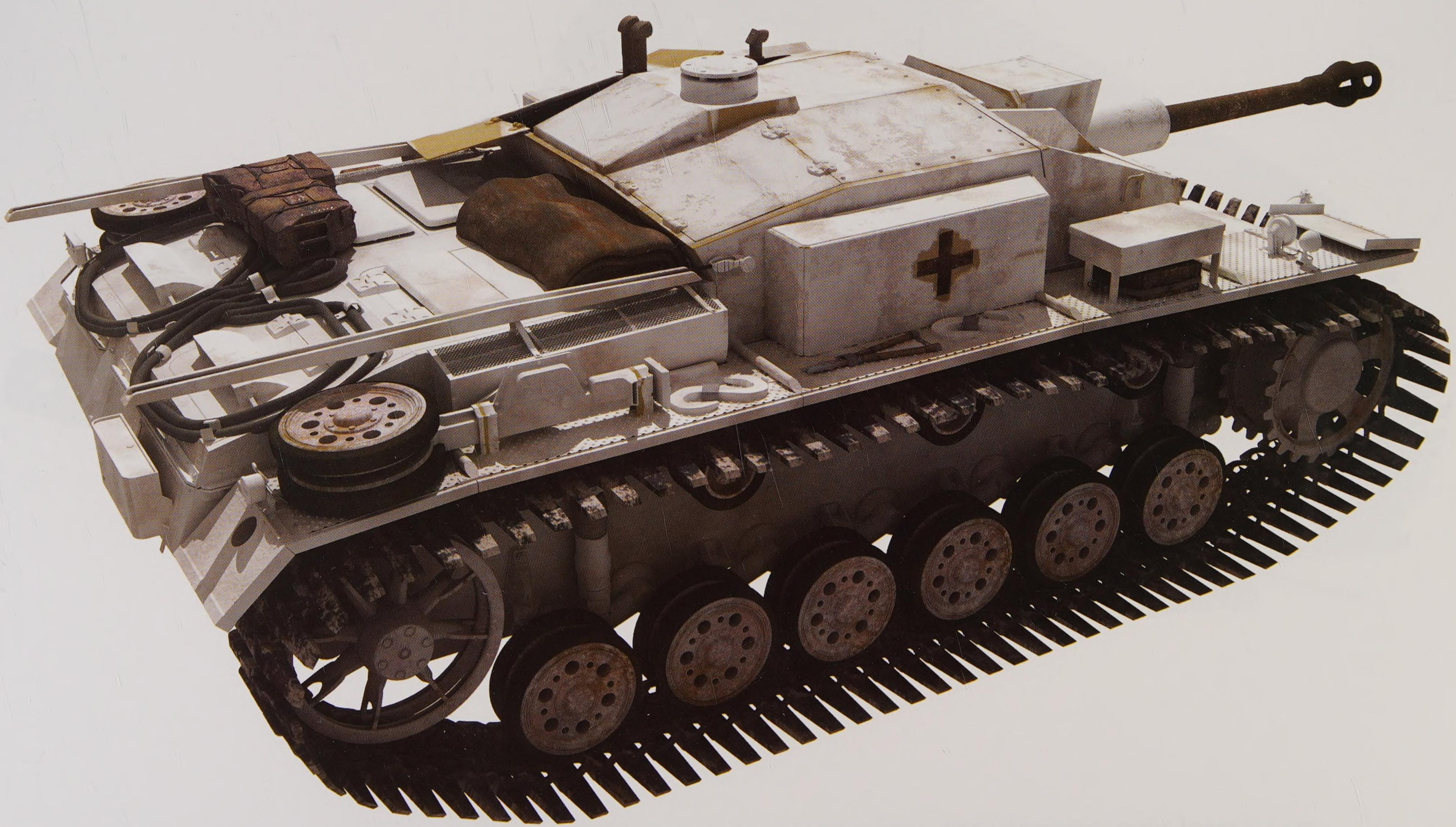

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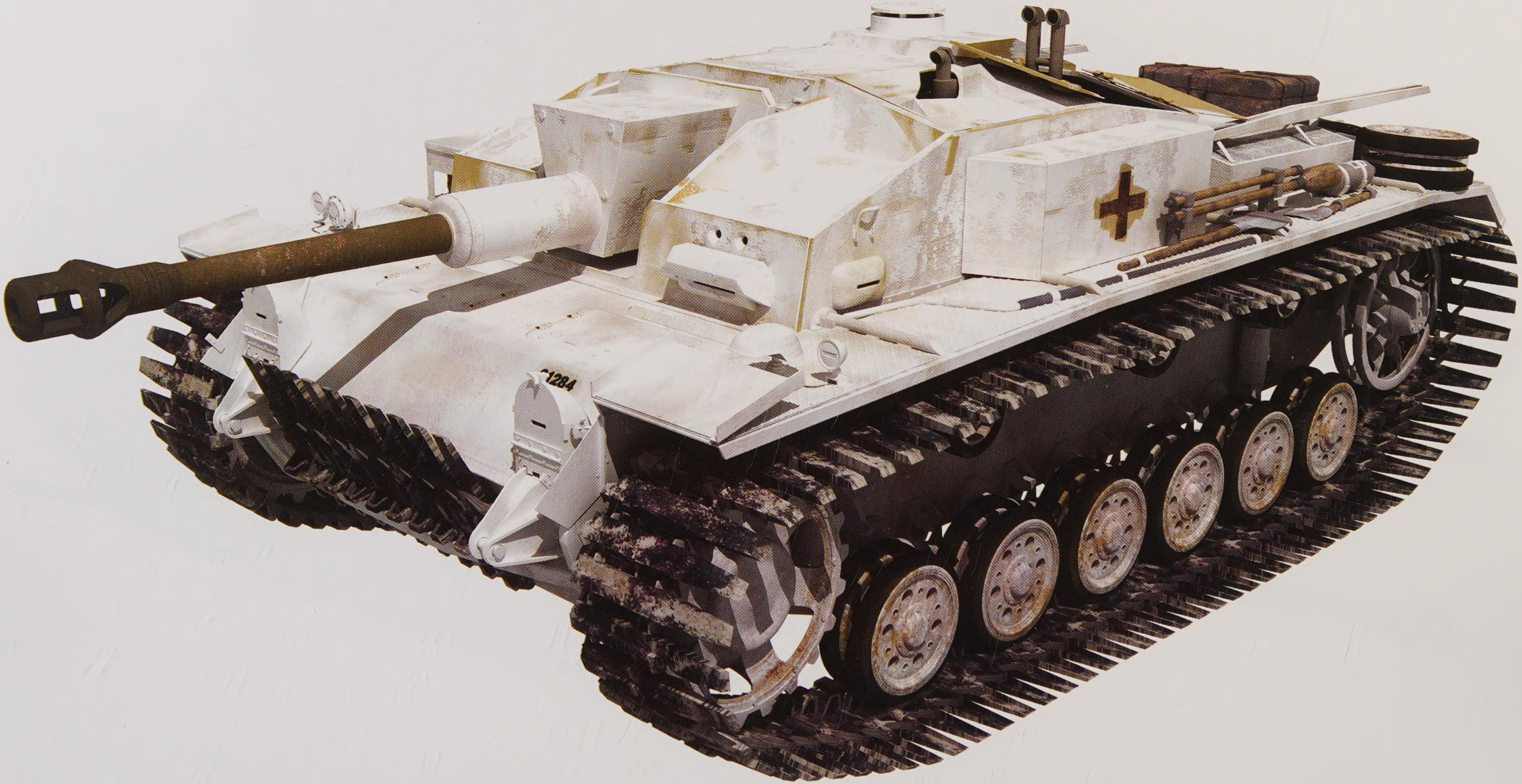

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